LIBRARIES NI
WITHDRAWN FROM STOCK

Acc

Clas

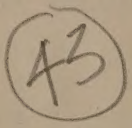
THE ENGLISH IN IRELAND.

VOLUME II.

THE ENGLISH IN IRELAND

IN THE

EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.



BY

JAMES ANTHONY FROUDE, M.A.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

LONDON:
LONGMANS, GREEN, AND CO.
1881.

PRINTED BY CLAY AND TAYLOR,

BUNGAY, SUFFOLK.

CONTENTS OF VOLUME II.

BOOK V.

CHAPTER I.

THE REVIVAL OF THE CELTS.

SECTION		PAGE
I.	Effects of English institutions in Ireland ...	2
	Irish finance	4
	The Oligarchy and its motives	6
	The Septennial Bill	8
II.	Growth of the Catholic population	12
	Revival of national spirit	13
	Dr. Curry's history	14
	Apparent Catholic loyalty	16
	Irish Catholic regiments raised for service in Portugal	19
III.	The landlords and the peasantry	22
	Absenteeism	24
	Whiteboys	24
	Father Sheehy	32
	Connection of the Whiteboys with the Pretender	35
IV.	Condition of the people	38
	The Pension List	39

SECTION PAGE

Scheme of George the Third for the better government of Ireland 44
Viceroyalty of Lord Townshend 49
V. Parties and persons 51
Henry Flood 54
Grattan and Fitzgibbon 55

CHAPTER II.

LORD TOWNSHEND'S ADMINISTRATION.

I. Irish views on Reform 61
Parliamentary intrigues 64
Principles of Irish politicians 68
Dissolution of Parliament 76
II. Material improvement of Ireland 78
Townshend's difficulties 80
Revenue frauds 82
Rejection of Supply Bill 86
Thoughts of governing Ireland without Parliament 88
Dismissals from the Council 93
Prorogation 95
III. Alternatives before Lord Townshend ... 97
Purgation of the Board of Revenue and defeat of the Oligarchy 99
Justice to Ireland 104
Indiscipline of the army 107
IV. Price of Townshend's victory 109
Resignation of the Speaker 112
Justice to Ireland again 115
V. Corruption and its effects 116
Fresh difficulties 118
Government relieved by Lord Shannon ... 124

SECTION PAGE
VI. Irish grand juries 126
The Oak Boys 127
The Donegal evictions and the Hearts of Steel 133
Emigration to America 134
Irishmen out of Ireland 139

CHAPTER III.

LORD HARCOURT AND COLONEL BLAQUIERE.

I. Irish Presbyterians 142
English Colonial policy 145
American complaints 146
Resolution of the English Parliament ... 150
Lexington 152
Bunker's Hill 153
II. Lord Harcourt as Viceroy 156
Introduction to Irish public life 158
Responsibilities of an Irish Secretary ... 159
Proposed Absentee Tax 163
III. Parliamentary manœuvres 172
Breach of the woollen compact 176
English injustice and its effects on Irish character 178
IV. Mr. Henry Flood 184
Lord Harcourt's difficulties 188
Sympathy between the Irish Protestants and America 190
Loyalty of the Irish Catholics 191
American tendencies of the Irish Parliament ... 194
Demands for justice 198
English perversity 200
New Parliament 202

BOOK VI.

CHAPTER I.

THE BEGINNINGS OF RETRIBUTION.

SECTION		PAGE
I.	Effects of misgovernment	205
	Irish landlords	207
	The Irish Church	210
	England to be brought to a reckoning ...	214
II.	The American War	216
	Surrender of General Burgoyne	219
	War with France and Spain	221
III.	American privateers in St. George's Channel ...	224
	Mr. Grattan in the Irish Parliament ...	225
	Catholic relief	226
	The Volunteer movement	227
	Paul Jones	229
	Relaxation of the Trade Laws	231
	Modification of the Penal Laws	233
	Privateers	236
	Debates on Ireland in the English Parliament...	238
	Woollen restrictions maintained	239
	Opinions of leading Irishmen on the causes of Irish distress	241
	Lord Lifford's opinion	242
	Mr. Pery	243
	Mr. Hussey Burgh	244
	Mr. Hely Hutchinson	245
IV.	Ireland undefended	250
	Formation of Volunteer Companies ...	252
	Paul Jones again	253
	The Irish Parliament demands Free Trade ...	257
	Volunteer demonstration	260

SECTION PAGE
Riot in Dublin 261
Speech of Hussey Burgh 263
V. Acknowledged wrongs of Ireland 266
Relief of the Presbyterians 268
VI. The embargo 272
The Black Prince and Princess 274
Grattan's resolutions 279
The Mutiny Act 280
The Patriot army 284
Demand for protection 287
The houghers 289
Non-importation agreement 291
The Viceroy's difficulties 293

CHAPTER II.

THE CONSTITUTION OF 1782.

I. League against England 295
The Protestant Colony of Ireland 297
Grattan and Catholic Emancipation... ... 299
II. Progress of the war in America 303
Lord Cornwallis in the Southern States ... 305
Surrender at York Town 309
III. Progress of revolutionary sentiment in Ireland 311
Difficulties in managing the Irish Parliament ... 312
The Volunteers 316
Session of 1781 317
Mr. Flood 320
Siege of Gibraltar 321
Attack on Poynings' Act 325
The 6th of George I. 326
Concessions to the Catholics 328

SECTION		PAGE
IV.	Effects of the Penal Laws	331
	The Dungannon Resolutions	334
	Catholic education	338
	Proposed policy of Hely Hutchinson ...	338
	Mr. Grattan	343
	Change of Ministry in England	345
V.	The Rockingham Administration	347
	Duke of Portland Viceroy of Ireland ...	348
	Errors of the English Liberal party in Irish policy	351
	Demands of the Patriots	353
VI.	Declaration of Rights	355
	Ultimatum of Mr. Grattan	358
	Public principle of Flood	361
	Correspondence of Portland with Lord Shelburne	364
	Alternative of the abandonment of Ireland ...	365
	England concedes Grattan's demands ...	369
	Constitution of '82	370
	Honours paid to Grattan	372
	Dissatisfaction of Flood	376
	General Reform	379
	Character of Flood	381

BOOK VII.

CHAPTER I.

THE CONVENTION.

I.	Anomalies in the New Constitution ...	385
	The Volunteers...	386
	Scene at Dunleckny	389

SECTION		PAGE
II.	Fresh alarms of danger to Irish liberty ...	392
	Effects of the revolution	394
	The Irish Parliament	396
	Two kinds of liberty	398
	The Volunteer delegates	401
III.	Opinion of Fox	405
	Grattan supports the Government ...	408
	Grattan and Flood	409
IV.	The Convention	413
	George Robert Fitzgerald ...	414
	The Bishop of Derry	415
	The Convention Reform Bill ...	419
	Speech of Fitzgibbon	423
	The Convention dissolves ...	426
V.	Changes in the Administration ...	430
	Houghing of soldiers	432
	Defeat of Reform Bill in Parliament ...	434
	An appeal before the Irish House of Lords ...	437
	Necessary increase of English influence ...	439
	Political morality of the Irish Peers ...	440
VI.	Difficulty of Government in Ireland ...	443
	Violence of the Dublin mob	445
	Tarring and Feathering Committee	447
	Irish patriots and Government detectives; Father O'Leary	450
VII.	Fitzgibbon and the Sheriff of Dublin ...	454
	Pitt's views on Reform	457
VIII.	Project for the improvement of Irish trade ...	460
	The Commercial propositions ill received ...	462
IX.	Speech of Fitzgibbon on the Volunteers ...	467
	Debate in Parliament	471
	Fresh schemes of Reform	475
X.	The Commercial propositions re-introduced ...	477
	Political tempest	480
	Fitzgibbon on Ireland and Great Britain ...	482

CHAPTER II.

WHITEBOYS, HIGH AND LOW.

SECTION		PAGE
I.	Social state of Ireland	487
	The Bishops of the Establishment	489
	Failure of the Charter Schools	491
	Tithe proctors	493
	Whiteboys	494
II.	The Pension List	503
	A Police Bill	506
	Opposed by the Patriots	508
	The Tithe question	512
	Repression of Whiteboys. Sir Richard Musgrave	515
III.	Conspiracy Bill	519
	Debate on the state of Munster	522
	Measures for the preservation of peace ...	528
IV.	General corruption of public life	530
	Peep-of-day Boys	533
V.	Grattan and the Prince of Wales	536
	Illness of George the Third	537
	Irish and English views on the Regency ...	539
	Expected change in the Irish Government ...	540
	Irish views of Independence	541
	Speech of Fitzgibbon on the Regency question	544
	Address of the Irish Houses to the Prince of Wales	549
	Second speech of Fitzgibbon	552
VI.	The Round Robin	557
	The King recovers	558
	Quarrels in the Irish Parliament	560
	Victory of the Government	562
	The Duke of Leinster and the Ponsonbies deprived of office	564
	Political scandal and the formation of the Whig Club	567

BOOK V.

CHAPTER I.

THE REVIVAL OF THE CELTS.

SECTION I.

A FREE government depends for its successful working on the loyal co-operation of the people. Where the people do not co-operate, the forms of liberty are either a mockery, or an instrument of disunion and anarchy. Had the Irish been regarded from the outset as a conquered people whom a stronger neighbour had forced, for its own convenience, into reluctant submission, Ireland would have escaped the worst of her calamities. Her clans would have been held in awe by an army; public order would have been preserved by a police: but her lands would have been left to their native owners; her customs and her laws might have been untouched, and her religion need not have been interfered with. The nature of the English constitution forbade an experiment which might have been dangerous to our own liberties. Ireland was in fact a foreign country; we preferred to assume that she was an integral part of the empire. We imposed upon her our own

modes of self-government; we gave her a parliament, we gave her our trial by jury and our common law; we assimilated the Irish Church to our own; and these magnificent institutions refused to root themselves in an uncongenial soil. The Parliament was forbidden to legislate till its decisions had been shaped for it beforehand. The rule of feudal tenure inflicted forfeiture on rebellion; the native owners were therefore dispossessed for asserting the liberties of their country; and their estates were bestowed upon aliens. The Irish preferred their own laws to ours. They became in consequence 'Irish enemies' and outlaws, and might be wronged and killed with impunity. When we forced them at last to submit to our laws, trial by jury made the execution of those laws impossible; and with equal impunity the colonists could then be murdered, their cattle houghed, and their daughters ravished by the natives. The Church being an estate of the realm and a governing section of the constitution, the Church in the two countries had to be shaped on the same pattern. At the conquest we forced the Irish Church into submission to the Papacy. At the Reformation we forced it to apostatise. As the Reformation pursued its course, the theory of our Church Establishment split the garrison of Protestants, whom we had planted in the island, into hostile camps. A free representative legislature which yet was not free and was not representative—a gentry who could not rule—a Church which could not teach —laws which could not be enforced—these were the consequences which resulted from the preference of

unreality to fact. They might all have been avoided had the truth been acknowledged and acted on; but England was unable to recognize that constitutional liberty in our country might be constitutional slavery in another.

If the object was to absorb and extinguish the spirit of Irish nationality, it signally failed of success. Had the union been conceded for which the presentiments of the Irish Parliament led them to petition in 1704; had trade and manufactures been allowed to develop, and the stream of British Protestant emigration been directed continuously into all parts of the island, the native population might have been overborne or driven out, and the mother country might have retained the affections of a people with whom she would then have been identified in interest and sentiment. By a contemptible jealousy she flung them back upon themselves, a minority amidst a hostile population, and condemned them to idleness and impoverishment; she left them to add their own grievances to the accumulated wrongs of the entire country; while she left them at the same time their own Parliament, in which the national discontent could find a voice; and taught them to look for allies among her own enemies.

The Protestant revolt will form the subject of the present volume. It was an act of madness—madness in the colony which revolted—madness in the mother country which provoked the quarrel. The colonists were an army of occupation amidst a spoliated nation who were sullenly brooding over their wrongs. By

England's help alone they could hope to retain their ascendancy. It was England's highest interest to keep the garrison strong, if she was to escape a recurrence of the dangers which had already cost her so dear. The colonists in their own vanity and exasperation forgot or despised the peril from a race whom they regarded as slaves. England, half conscious of an injustice which she was too proud or too negligent to redress, attempted to hold the colony in check by patronizing and elevating the Catholic Celts. Before the story can proceed, the events mentioned at the close of the last chapter require to be described more particularly.

Poisonous as were the laws in restraint of trade, unequal as was the executive government to the repression of the most vulgar crimes, the administration of Ireland possessed a single merit. If it did nothing, it cost little. The taxation was light, and the finances, notwithstanding the infamy of the Pension List, were economically managed. At the middle of the century the annual revenue averaged eight hundred thousand pounds. Of the entire sum, the fixed excise and customs duties, the quit rents, and the hearth money which had been settled upon the Crown, and were beyond control of Parliament, produced three quarters, which were supplemented by a biennial grant. A debt of a million incurred in the Spanish succession war was reduced on the re-establishment of peace. In 1749 the income exceeded the expenditure, and it was agreed on all hands that the surplus should be appropriated to the discharge of the little that remained. On the principle

there was no difference. But whether the Irish House of Commons was to have the honour of suggesting the appropriation in compliance with their asserted privilege of originating their own money bills, or whether it was to be recommended from England, according to the English construction of Poynings' Act, which forbade the introduction of bills into the Irish Parliament that had not been first submitted to the English Council, became a burning question. The self-respect of Ireland was held to depend on the right solution of it, and the two countries flung themselves into the struggle with a passion of political desperation during three biennial sessions. In 1749, in 1751, and in 1753 the Viceroys informed the Commons in the speech from the throne that his majesty would recommend the application of the surplus to the payment of debt. The Commons took no notice of the recommendation, drew the heads of their bills on their own initiation, and forwarded them to England. In England the heads were altered by the Council, and the King's previous consent was re-introduced. Twice the Irish Parliament submitted with murmurs. In 1753, under the viceroyalty of the Duke of Dorset, they threw out the altered bill by a majority of five. The additional duties were refused and the business of the country was brought to a standstill. 1753

A majority in the House of Commons was at this time returned by four great families. The Fitzgeralds of Kildare, the Boyles, the Ponsonbys, and the Beresfords, by their county influence and their private

boroughs, were the political sovereigns of Ireland. The government was carried on by their assistance, and they received in return the patronage of the State. The Viceroy understood the meaning of the vote. The great houses were affecting patriotism for objects of their own, and he found it necessary to capitulate. The terms were privately arranged; Boyle, the Speaker of the House of Commons, was made Earl of Shannon, with a pension of 2000*l.* a year. John Ponsonby succeeded Boyle as Speaker. The patriot orators were silenced by promotions. Anthony Malone became Chancellor of the Exchequer; Stannard, Recorder of Dublin, another eloquent exponent of the wrongs of Ireland, was made Prime Sergeant. The opposition to England's initiation of money bills was suspended till the great families were again hungry, and fresh expectants of promotion were in a position to be troublesome.

The Parliament determined with the Sovereign. On the death of George the Second the House, which had been elected at his accession, came to its mature end, and in October, 1761, the first session was to open of the new representation.

Anticipating a demand for a fine on the renewal of the lease, and resolved to resist at the outset the patriotic affectations which were used as a pretext for agitation, the English Council inserted in the first bill, which was sent over to be laid before the new Parliament, a clause for the application of a sum of money. The Earl of Halifax, who was now viceroy, was deafened with the clamours of the Irish servants of the Crown,

and doubted the wisdom of his chiefs. The supporters of Government threatened apostasy. The ministers, Halifax thought, might be right in the abstract, but they were pressing an invidious claim in the face of a notorious prejudice. The supplies might be again challenged, and at the opening of a new reign it might be unwise to commence with a quarrel.[1] The Secretary of State[2] gave the Viceroy to understand that the insertion of the clause had been made deliberately, and was to be insisted on. The right of Great Britain was indubitable. The assertion of it was considered indispensably necessary to the King's honour and the vindication of the prerogative. The bill must be laid before Parliament in the form in which it had been sent over. If it failed, Halifax would not be held responsible.[3]

The storm which Halifax anticipated would have certainly risen but for peculiar conditions under which the new members had been returned. The corruption with which the Government had secured a majority on the appropriation of the surplus had suggested to the constituencies that they might themselves obtain a share in the plunder. Seats in Parliament had been hitherto virtually for life. More frequent elections would compel the representatives to divide their spoils with their supporters. At the elections, to their general surprise, the candidates had been called on for a promise to

[1] 'Halifax to the Earl of Egremont, October 11, 1761.' S. P. O.

[2] Wyndham, Earl of Egremont, who took office with Newcastle in 1761.

[3] 'Egremont to Halifax, October 20.' S. P. O.

support a Septennial Act; pledges to that effect having been especially exacted from the servants of the Crown as the price of their return.[1]

Embarrassed with the prospect of a change which they secretly disliked, while they were themselves afraid to oppose it, to the surprise of Halifax they declined the challenge on the money bill. They passed the supplies by a large majority. They ventured a resolution that the Pension List had been increased without sufficient reason,[2] and seemed to threaten an attack upon it. The Viceroy lectured the Lords Justices. Egremont wrote that the King was amazed and offended at so extraordinary a demonstration, and insisted that there should be no repetition of it.[3] The excitement was unnecessary; the real attention of the Commons was absorbed in the Septennial Bill. Dr. Lucas, the patriot member for Dublin, introduced the heads at the opening of the session. In December, when the Pension storm had abated, the subject came forward for discussion. Halifax had received no instructions. He expressed no opinion and offered no opposition. If the ministry considered the measure objectionable, he said he could stop it in Council, but he was evidently uncertain in what light it would be regarded.

Could the Commons have been assured that the bill would be rejected in England they would have passed

---

[1] 'Halifax to Egremont, October 1761, and December 4, 1761.'

[2] The Civil Pension List had grown from 54,497*l.* in 1759, to 64,127*l.* in 1761. *Commons' Journals, Ireland*, 1761.

[3] 'Halifax and Egremont Correspondence, November 1761.' S.P.O.

it with acclamations. The neutral attitude of the Viceroy alarmed them. They were afraid to turn it out. They were afraid that if sent over it might be returned unopposed. They escaped from the difficulty by attaching to it a property qualification as a condition of eligibility so heavy, that so encumbered the most ardent patriot could only desire that the bill might fail.[1] It was presented to the Viceroy, but without the forms which were observed usually with popular measures. When the House desired to signify a special desire that a bill should be returned to them, the heads were carried to the Castle by the Speaker, attended by the entire body of members. A motion that the heads of the Septennial Act should be so presented was defeated by a majority of two to one, and no sooner had a private member placed the heads in Halifax's hands, than its authors manœuvred to stop the bill in the Irish Council. Halifax reported that the change was 'uniformly disliked by the most unprejudiced people of rank, influence, and fortune.' 'They were alarmed by secret, and, as they thought, authentic information, that if transmitted it would certainly be returned to them;'[2] and Shannon, Ponsonby, and the other prominent members of the Council of State, requested an assurance that their alarms were unfounded before they would consent to let it go.

The ministry, playing with their fears, replied that

[1] For a county seat the qualification was to be an estate of 600*l.* a year, for a borough seat 300*l.*

[2] 'Halifax to Egremont, December 11 and December 23, 1761.' S. P. O.

the King could make no engagements beforehand. The Dublin merchants held a meeting to protest against 'the clandestine arts' by which an important reform was obstructed. The heads were at last transmitted, passing the Council only, however, by a majority of one. 'The popularity of the Bill has diminished,' wrote Halifax, 'as the probability of its being carried into law has increased. Nobody wishes for it. It is unacceptable to those who seemed most sanguine in its favour. Unanimous as they were at first, they will now throw it out rather than pass it.' With a curious consciousness that if the Irish Parliament became a reality it would cease to exist, the patriot members began to fear that the agitation had been set on foot by English treachery, 'as a preliminary step towards a Union.'[1]

They might have spared their terrors. Either by design or accident, the draftsman had added a condition which made the bill into an absurdity, and relieved the government of the necessity of bestowing the most transient consideration on the subject. The heads of the Septennial Act were submitted as usual to the English law officers of the Crown. They returned it to the Lords of the Council with the following report:—

'We have examined the Act for limiting the duration of Parliament transmitted from Ireland. So much thereof as limits the duration to a term of seven years, imports a most essential alteration in the constitution

[1] 'Halifax to Egremont, February 18, 1762.'

of Ireland. The fitness or unfitness of this provision is a matter of State of so high a nature that we submit the same entirely to the wisdom of your lordships.

'For the qualification of members we doubt how far such provisions are expedient for Ireland—whether the qualification be not too high, and the exceptions too few.

'An amendment, however, is absolutely necessary. No member is to sit, according to the Act, till his qualification is proved, while a full House is sitting, with the Speaker in the chair. The law, therefore, can never be executed, nor any business at all, because no Speaker can be chosen before the members have a right to vote; and no member can exercise his right of voting till such Speaker is chosen.'[1]

---

[1] 'Report of the Attorney- and Solicitor-General of England to the Right Honourable the Lords of a Committee of the Privy Council Appointed to Consider the Irish Bills. March 5, 1762.' S. P. O.

SECTION II.

The penal laws had failed to coerce the Catholics into conformity. The Charter schools had failed to convert them. The penal laws had failed because the English Government had interposed to protect the Catholic clergy. The Charter schools had failed, having been choked in Irish society, as wholesome vegetables are choked in a garden when the weeds are allowed scope to spring.[1] Celtic Ireland was reviving from the stupor into which she had been thrown by the Revolution. Exclusion from the land had driven the more energetic of the Catholics into trade. Protestants who had to seek their fortunes had gone to countries where they were more fairly dealt with, and had left the field open. A commercial Catholic population, ambitious and wealthy, was springing up in Dublin, Limerick, and Cork; and a time was visibly

---

[1] Within a few years of their establishment the Charter schools had ceased to grow. Private benefactions fell off; and though Parliament made no difficulty in voting money, the annual grants were swallowed up by peculation. The industrial training, so excellent in conception, degenerated by negligence into a system in which the children became the slaves of the masters, and grew up in rags and starvation. As the numbers fell off, infant nurseries were established, the society observing that parents were more willing to part with their children when very young. These nurseries, from a report of one of the managers to the House of Commons, appear at last to have been merely foundling asylums, twenty infants having been found at one of them 'exposed' among the carpenters' shavings. *Commons' Journals*, November 10, 1761.

approaching when their relations to the soil would have to be reconsidered. Liberal English politicians were always looking to the Catholics as a convenient counterpoise to the Protestant colonists, whom ill-usage was exasperating into disaffection. A section of the Catholics, in return—the educated men of business, the more temperate of the bishops, the noblemen of Norman-English blood, the Fingals, the Kenmares, the Trimlestons, who had preserved their estates and were allowed their titles by courtesy—were willing enough to meet advances to them with cordiality and gratitude.

By the side of these, within the same communion, were the irreconcilable spirits who inherited the past traditions — the representatives of the dispossessed chiefs—who nursed in secret their unappeased resentment, and revenged their wrongs when opportunity offered, as ravishers of women, cattle-houghers, incendiaries, and agrarian assassins. To them England was the cause of all the woes which they suffered, and was and should be to the end a loathed and execrated enemy. They were themselves the descendants of the men who had fought at Aghrim, and been cheated at Limerick. In the French brigade they had still an army on the Continent, which they recruited annually from their own ranks, and to which they looked as their future avenger.

The first section accepted their situation, and made the best of it. The second brooded over their wrongs, and fed themselves with dreams of vengeance. Both, perhaps, were at bottom of the same nature, and were

working towards the same end; but their outward attitude was markedly different. The English Government, accepting the distinction as real, made it the basis of its Irish policy, and the rule of the Castle statesmanship was to conciliate the more reputable Catholics, and to assume that the Catholic creed, as such, no longer forbade or interfered with allegiance to a Protestant sovereign. The first open sign of the approaching change was in the viceroyalty of the Duke of Bedford, who, while in office in 1757, spoke in terms so unambiguous of a relaxation of the penal laws, that public thanks were bestowed on him from the altars of the Catholic chapels. It might have been well to relax the penal laws had the causes for which they were imposed been clearly asserted and admitted. Unhappily the desire of conciliation was pressed so far as to disfigure and conceal the facts of history. An annual sermon, preached before the House of Commons on the 23rd of October, was designed to keep alive the memory of the rebellion and massacres of 1641. Dr. Curry, a Catholic physician of eminence, ventured boldly on the same ground. In a memoir of the period he revived the plea which was alleged to Charles the Second in bar of the Act of Settlement, that the rebellion was no rebellion, but the innocent and cruelly misrepresented effort of a loyal people to defend the Crown against Puritan usurpation; that half of the alleged cruelties were the invention of fanatical bigots; that the rest were enormously exaggerated; and that so far as blood had been shed at all, it was only in self-defence against

a deliberate design to exterminate the Catholic population.

Dr. Curry's story will not bear examination, but it was well contrived to fall in with the growing sentiment that the past had better be forgotten; and thus a legend was allowed to re-establish itself unreproved, which teaches the Irish Catholics to regard themselves as victims of an atrocious conspiracy—a conspiracy to rob them of their lands, and to justify it by blackening their reputation.

Bedford proposed to repeal the bill against the clergy, and to allow an adequate supply of priests, ordained abroad, to be systematically introduced and registered. The Catholics declined an offer which, in legalising the presence of their clergy, would have deprived them of their bishops;[1] but they were too shrewd to refuse to recognize the good intentions of the Government, and they made haste to display in other ways their willingness to meet them. The splendid triumphs of Chatham's foreign policy—the conquest of

[1] It seems, from a letter of Dr. O'Connor to Dr. Curry, that the offer was not refused without hesitation. 'They offer us a Registry Bill,' he writes, 'which is calculated to extirpate our very remains. Nothing can be better known than that our spiritual economy cannot be exercised without the spiritual jurisdiction of our bishops. Yet the jurisdiction of Catholic bishops is totally overturned by this blessed boon which is to destroy Popery by Popery itself. . . I see now there is no remedy but emigration. I can never think of this legal annihilation of episcopal authority without alternate emotions of anger and dejection. I am told that after this Bill passes, the penal clauses shall be as little enforced as those already existing. Vain presumption! This penal law is calculated to execute itself; and ourselves shall be the executioners.'—*Plowden, Appendix*, No. 61.

India, the expulsion of the French from the Canadas, and the victories of the English everywhere, as unexpected as they were brilliant, provoked Louis XV. to aim a blow in return at England's vulnerable side. The officers of the Irish brigade held out the usual hope that an invasion of Munster would be followed by a rising of the people. The intention becoming known, the Dublin Catholics came forward with a demonstration of loyalty. Under Dr. Curry's guidance a declaration of allegiance, signed by three hundred Catholic merchants, was presented to the Viceroy, received graciously, and published in the *Gazette*. The supineness of the Protestants played into their hands. The French fleet sailed. It was destroyed by Hawke at Belleisle,[1] and the opportunity of proving the sincerity of their professions was not afforded them; but their outward conduct contrasted not a little to their advantage with the languor of the Lords and Commons and the Irish Executive.

The Catholics, though disarmed, were at least outwardly zealous. The colonists were snarling over the initiation of money bills, or dishonestly manœuvring with Septennial Acts. Dr. Curry pursued his advantage. He established a permanent committee in Dublin to watch over Catholic interests in communication with the Government. For some unexplained reason, Spanish influence was thought more powerful for evil in Ireland than the French, and when, in 1761, Spain was added to the number of England's

1761.

[1] November 20, 1759.

enemies, the committee thought the time was come to sue for distinct recognition.

'The conduct,' wrote Lord Halifax, in explaining the overture which was made to him,[1] 'which the Roman Catholics of this country are likely to observe in the course of the war with France and Spain is of great consequence. The French interest would, I believe, never have found any essential support; but a different effect might be apprehended from the Spanish connection. I have, therefore, watched the Catholics carefully, and I have now the pleasure of transmitting professions which I trust will give as much satisfaction to you as to me. Lord Trimleston[2] is the most sensible man belonging to the Catholics in this country. His weight with them is great, and he is most to be depended on. He assures me that all impressions in favour of the Stuart family are worn out with gentlemen of consequence and fortune in this country. The present war, he says, has occasioned such a strain on England, as has suggested to his majesty's Roman Catholic subjects here, that means may possibly now be struck out whereby they may give proof of their loyalty. They have nothing so much at heart.

'I reminded him that no Roman Catholic officer, without which he seemed to think that no considerable body of men could be raised, could by law be admitted

[1] 'Halifax and Egremont Correspondence, 1762.' S. P. O.

[2] Robert Barnewalle, descended from Sir Robert Barnewalle, created Lord Trimleston by Edward IV.

into his majesty's service. He answered that their best endeavours should be exerted for the King's service in any way he should be pleased to direct. On so general an opening many ideas crowded on me; we are engaged in two wars when we were almost exhausted by one; what men will be wanted your lordship best knows. I asked whether, if his majesty's allies, Prussia, Hesse, Portugal, or any other friendly powers wanted troops, they could be raised. He said that what the Roman Catholics of Ireland most wished, as they could not by law serve under his majesty as king, was that they might be taken into his service as Elector of Hanover. He added, the Irish brigade in France are so disgusted with that service, that if a door was opened to them by his majesty they would crowd to it. An offer of this sort, and at such a time, would be suspicious if those who made it were not ready to give every pledge of their sincerity. Such as it is I lay it before your lordship.'

Enclosed in this letter was an address signed 'by the principal Catholic noblemen and gentlemen, professing to contain the sentiments of all Papists of consequence,' and a circular 'sent by the Catholic bishops to the priests of every parish in the kingdom.' The address expressed gratitude for past 'clemency.' It declared the eagerness of the Catholics of Ireland to exert themselves in their country's cause wherever they should be thought worthy to be employed; and it dwelt on the regret felt by them that hitherto they had been unable to give more than passive proofs of

the goodness of their disposition. The circular was to remind the congregations of the duty of obedience to the Government, and of the lenity and indulgence with which they had been lately treated. It bade them recollect that the penal laws had been enacted in reigns anterior to the accession of the House of Hanover.

The petition was well timed. It was modest in conception. It found England in a state of just and growing irritation with the Protestant Parliament and gentry.

'His majesty,' Egremont replied, 'receives with confidence and pleasure the assurances which Lord Trimleston has given, and you may signify as much to his lordship. Difficulties have been started as to the legality of the King's raising a body of Roman Catholics though for the service of the Elector of Hanover, but his majesty is desirous to give them an opportunity of exerting their loyalty. His majesty is about to send help to Portugal. It might be possible to induce a certain number of Catholics of Ireland to engage for a limited period in the Portuguese service. His majesty would count it as an effectual assistance and an agreeable mark of zeal.'[1]

The negotiation once opened ripened rapidly. Trimleston went to England to speak with the ministers. Lord Kenmare undertook the raising of the troops. Seven regiments were to be collected, drilled,

[1] 'Egremont to Halifax, February 23, 1762.' S. P. O.

and armed in Ireland. They were to retain their privileges as British subjects. They were to be under the protection and virtually under the command of their own sovereign. The time of service was ten years, at the end of which they were to return to their country.[1]

The people were enthusiastic; recruits poured in. In a few weeks an Irish Catholic army would have been once more on foot. Unhappily the consent was needed of the Irish House of Commons, and a feeling, which Halifax regarded as ill-bred bigotry, blighted the promising experiment. Objections were raised that so many hands could not be spared from labour, objections of a hundred kinds, and from every party combined. The unexpressed but real ground of opposition was an obstinate and fanatical dislike to see 'favour or confidence shown to the Catholics.'[2]

Whether Irish Protestant bigotry or English liberalism had formed the more correct view of the situation will be immediately seen.

---

[1] Proposals for the Catholic regiments, March 14. S. P. O.
[2] 'Halifax to Egremont, April 17, 1762.' S. P. O.

SECTION III.

Lord Trimleston and the Dublin Committee insisted that the Catholics of Ireland had been loyal to the British Government. Had the fact been as they represented it, Catholic loyalty would have furnished an unanswerable proof of the wisdom of the penal laws. The inveterate turbulence of the Irish race would have at last yielded, and the rude assertion of authority and the demonstrated hopelessness of resistance would have broken a spirit which for six centuries had baffled any previous effort either to conciliate or subdue it. That the Catholic gentry who had retained part of their estates, and the leading Catholic clergy who understood the relative strength of the two countries, were unwilling to renew a struggle which, if unsuccessful, would entail fresh forfeitures and the execution of laws at present suspended, is doubtless perfectly true. That the other section of the Catholics, the heirs of the land which had been torn from their ancestors, and the dependents of the ruined families whose interests were the interests of their chiefs; that the poorer priests who identified their faith with their country, who looked to the unbroken spirit of the old race to reconquer for them the supremacy of their Church, that these were either disheartened or reconciled, that under any circumstances, short of full restoration and expiation, these men would cease to regard England and the English

connection with any feelings short of inveterate hatred, could be believed only by persons who were wilfully blind to the unchangeableness of the Irish disposition Had the new owners of the soil resided on their estates, had they taught their unwilling tenants that the rule of England meant the rule of justice, had colonies of Scots and Englishmen been scattered over the land, had the Irish been able to learn by the contrast the material advantages of industry and energy, had they found in their conquerors beneficent masters who would have put down wrong-doing and oppression of man by man, who would have erected schools for their children, who would have treated them as human beings and helped them to live in decency, they were not framed so differently from the common posterity of Adam but that in time their prejudices would have given way. But to four-fifths of the Irish peasantry the change of masters meant only a grinding tyranny, and tyranny the more unbearable because inflicted by aliens in blood and creed. Under their own chiefs they had been miserable, but they were suffering at least at the hands of their natural sovereigns; and the clansman who bore his lord's name, and if harshly used by his own master, was protected by him against others, could not feel himself utterly without a friend. But the oppression of the peasantry in the last century was not even the oppression of a living man—it was the oppression of a system. The peasant of Tipperary was in the grasp of a dead hand. The will of a master whom he never saw was enforced against him by a law irresistible as destiny.

The absentee landlords of Ireland had neither community of interest with the people nor sympathy of race. They had no fear of provoking their resentment, for they lived beyond their reach. They had no desire for their welfare, for as individuals they were ignorant of their existence. They regarded their Irish estates as the sources of their income; their only desire was to extract the most out of them which the soil could be made to yield; and they cared no more for the souls and bodies of those who were in fact committed to their charge than the owners of a West Indian plantation for the herds of slaves whose backs were blistering in the cane fields.

Thus universally through the southern provinces there was settled and sullen discontent. The peasantry continued to regard the land as their own; and with the general faith that wrong cannot last for ever, they waited for the time when they would once more have possession of it. 'The lineal descendants of the old families,' wrote Arthur Young, in 1774, 'are now to be found all over the kingdom, working as cottiers on the lands which were once their own. In such great revolutions of property the ruined proprietors have usually been extirpated or banished. In Ireland the case was otherwise, and it is a fact that in most parts of the kingdom the descendants of the old land-owners regularly transmit by testamentary deed the memorial of their right to those estates which once belonged to their families.'[1] Acts of savage ferocity

[1] *Tour in Ireland*, vol. ii. p. 133.

which burst out from time to time showed that the volcanic fires were unextinguished, and might at any moment break out once more; and all along there was a secret connection between local agrarian passion and political disaffection. The Irish brigade served as an escape valve for the fiercer enthusiasts. The clergy had been directed from Rome to support the claims of the Pretender, and the Pretender's cause was never popular with the indigenous Irish. They had not forgiven the Act of Settlement or the cowardice which had betrayed them on the Boyne. They were ready, however, if a chance offered itself, and if there was no better outlook, to take arms in his favour; and although Lord Trimleston might have said truly that the Catholic gentry had ceased to take an interest in the Stuart cause, he was deceiving himself or deceiving the Viceroy when he undertook to speak for the Catholics as a whole. Coincidently with the intended invasion and the appearance on the coast of M. Thurot, began the celebrated Whiteboy disturbances in Tipperary. Many causes had combined at that moment to exasperate the normal irritation of the southern peasantry. With the growth of what was called civilization, absenteeism, the worst disorder of the country, had increased. In Charles the Second's time the absentees were few or none. But the better Irish gentlemen were educated, and the more they knew of the rest of the world, the less agreeable they found Ireland and Irish manners; while the more they separated themselves from their estates, the more they increased their rents to support

the cost of living elsewhere. The rise in prices, the demand for salt beef and salt butter for exportation and for the fleets,[1] were revolutionizing the agriculture of Munster. The great limestone pastures of Limerick and Tipperary, the fertile meadow land universally, was falling into the hands of capitalist graziers, in whose favour the landlords, or the landlords' agents, were evicting the smaller tenants.[2] They had the aims of English men of business without the redeeming features of the English character. Their object was to make money, and they cared not at what cost to the people that object was attained; while they combined with their unscrupulousness the worst vices of the worst class of the lower Irish gentry, and were slovenly, extravagant, and dissipated.[3] To the peasantry these men were a curse. Common lands, where their own cows had been fed, were enclosed and taken from them. The change from tillage to grazing destroyed their employment. Their sole subsistence was from their potato gardens, the rents of which were heavily raised, while, by a curious mockery of justice, the grass lands were exempt from tythe, and the burden of maintaining

[1] The war gave an enormous stimulus to the salt beef trade. Not only were the English fleets supplied from Cork, but the French and Spanish as well.

[2] In Limerick, Tipperary, Clare, Meath, and Waterford there are to be found the greatest graziers and cowkeepers, perhaps, in the world: some who rent and occupy from 3000*l.* to 10,000*l.* a year.—ARTHUR YOUNG, vol. ii. p. 102.

[3] These graziers are too apt to attend to their claret as much as to their bullocks; they live expensively; and being enabled from the nature of their business to pass nine-tenths of the year without any exertion of industry, contract such a habit of ease that works of improvement would be mortifying to their sloth.—Ibid.

the rectors and vicars of the Established Church was cast exclusively on the Catholic poor.

Among a people who are suffering under a common wrong there is a sympathy of resentment which links them together without visible or discoverable bond. In the spring of 1760 Tipperary was suddenly overrun by bands of midnight marauders. Who they were was a mystery. Rumours reached England of insurgent regiments drilling in the moonlight; of French officers observed passing and repassing the Channel. But no French officer could be detected in Munster; the most rigid search discovered no stands of arms, such as soldiers use or could use. This only was certain, that white figures were seen in vast numbers, like moving clouds, flitting silently at night over field and moor, leaving behind them the tracks of where they had passed in levelled fences and houghed and moaning cattle; where the owners were specially hateful, in blazing homesteads, and the inmates' bodies blackening in the ashes. Arrests were generally useless. The country was sworn to secrecy. Through the entire central plains of Ireland the people were bound by the most solemn oaths never to reveal the name of a confederate, or give evidence in a court of justice. When subpœnaed, forced to appear, and thus to perjure themselves on one side or the other, they preferred to keep the oath to their friends. Thus it was long uncertain how the movement originated, who were its leaders and whether they were one or many. Letters signed by Captain Dwyer or Joanna Meskell were left at the

doors of obnoxious persons, ordering lands to be abandoned under penalties. If the commands were uncomplied with, the penalties were inexorably inflicted. In one fortnight four innocent girls, who had the misfortune to be the children of wealthy parents on Captain Dwyer's black list, were carried off, violated, and forced into marriage with the ceremonies which have been described elsewhere. Torture usually being preferred to murder, male offenders against the Whiteboys were houghed like their cattle, or their tongues were torn out by the roots. Another favourite amusement was to seize some poor wretch in his bed, carry him naked to a hill side, fling him into a pit lined with thorns, and filling in the earth to his chin, leave him to live or die.[1]

---

[1] Many Whiteboy letters are preserved in Dublin Castle. On March 11, 1760, Captain Dwyer gave notice that a certain John Harden had taken the lands of a worthy gentleman . . . He had promised on the Evangelists to restore them, and the promise was still unfulfilled. John Harden was informed that unless the deed of surrender was signed by a particular day, his house should be burnt, his cattle and his children should be houghed, his own tongue should be cut out, and he should then be shot dead and be 'sent to the shades below.'

Samuel Geylin, doubly obnoxious as a grazier and a revenue officer, who had been rash enough, like a notorious villain, to make a seizure of tobacco, was cautioned to behave with more lenity and mildness, or he should have a brace of bullets in his body, &c. Other manifestoes were more temperate, and are instructive, as showing the real grievances of which the people had to complain. Here is one of them for the year 1762 :—

'We, levellers and avengers for the wrongs done to the poor, have unanimously assembled to raze walls and ditches that have been made to enclose the commons. Gentlemen now of late have learned to grind the face of the poor so that it is impossible for them to live. They cannot even keep a pig or a hen at their doors. We warn them not to raise again either walls or ditches in the place of those we destroy, nor even to en-

It was necessary to repress these atrocities. In a country which is unfortunately governed by a Parliament

quire about the destroyers of them. If they do, their cattle shall be houghed and their sheep laid open in the fields. Gentlemen, we beg you will consider the case of the poor now-a-days. You that live on the fat of the land consider poor creatures whom you harass without means of proper subsistence. Use them better for the future, and do not imagine it is with a view of creating trouble for the Government we do this thing, for we are as loyal to our king and country as you are.'

The most interesting of all the Whiteboy papers is a letter from Joanna Meskell to a gentleman who had called a county meeting to concert measures for restoring order, or, as Joanna expressed it, 'for defeating the method I have taken to ward off an impending famine from my poor people which some persons erroneously call a rebellion.'

'Your Honour is sensible,' she says, 'that while of the land which their ancestors held at four or five shillings an acre they got a few acres at four pounds, to set potatoes in, they behaved peaceably and quietly. Your Honour is also sensible that the laws of the land have made no provision for them, and that the customs of the country seem to have been appointed for their total destruction and desolation; upstarts supplanting my poor people on expiration of their leases, and stocking their lands with bullocks, a practice not known in any part of the world, Ireland only excepted. I have thought it incumbent on me to provide for the support of my people as inoffensively as I could, by ordering them to dig up a few fields, offering to occupiers treble rent for the same. As to the killing of cattle on a late occasion, it was intended as a scheme to awe some obstinate and uncharitable stock-jobbers into compliance with the just and necessary demands of my poor afflicted people. The premises considered, I flatter myself you will please to commiserate the deplorable state of the poor by putting the Tillage Act* in force for them, for my army, which consists of no less than 500,000 effective men in this kingdom ready to take the field at a few hours' notice, cannot live on air. They shall be all entirely devoted to his majesty's service, provided they are used with lenity; but if at the instance of a few self interested persons you shall take any violent or rigorous steps against them, no gentleman having been hitherto molested, you may blame yourselves for the consequence.

'Your Honour's obedient servant

'JOANNA MESKELL.'

MSS. Dublin Castle.

* Act ordering all landholders to keep five acres in tillage out of every hundred which they occupied

ment representing only the holders of property, the crimes of the poor receive more attention than the causes of them. The Irish gentry regarded the White-boy movement as an insurrection against the rights of property and the Protestant religion. The English Government, caring little for landlord or tenant, and less for Protestant ascendancy, enquired only whether the leaders were in correspondence with France. Egremont declared, on information of his own, that 'the grievances of the poor were a pretence.' 'The inveterate enemies of England, driven to despair elsewhere, were taking to Ireland as a last resource.'[1] Halifax, under the influence of Trimleston and the Dublin committee, persuaded himself that the disturbances had been encouraged by the ultra-Protestant faction to revive the terrors of Popery, and prevent the formation of the Irish Catholic regiments. Tipperary was proclaimed. Troops were sent to the baronies where the disorders had been most violent. Sir William Aston, Chief Justice of the Common Pleas, went with a special commission to Clonmel, to try the prisoners with which the gaols were crowded. The result was the almost universal acquittal, which Halifax anticipated and desired. The prosecution broke down for want of evidence. The House of Commons had appointed a committee to enquire into the causes of 'the Popish insurrection of Munster.'[2] Halifax insisted that the most careful scrutiny had failed to discover any

[1] 'Egremont to Halifax, April 13, 1762.' S. P. O.
[2] *Commons' Journals*, April 12, 1762.

traces either of political or religious disaffection; that the riots had been purposely exaggerated, and were completely at an end.[1] Five Whiteboys were executed at Waterford, whose guilt, after all, was but half proved. A few more were sent on board the fleet. The rest of the prisoners were dismissed; and so well pleased were the peasantry with the Chief Justice, that when the commission was over, and he left Clonmel, the road was lined with women and children, imploring blessings on him, upon their knees.

Yet Egremont, after all, had been partially right, and the House of Commons partially right; and of the three interpretations given of the Whiteboy rising, that of Halifax and Aston was the furthest from the truth. The acquittal might have been just if oppression be an excuse for crime. Yet, as in 1797, behind the defenders lay the schemes of the United Irishmen, so in 1762, behind the agrarian riots lay treason, political and religious; and the wrongs of the exasperated peasantry were only the instruments of intriguing and more dangerous incendiaries. The most remarkable feature in the story is the success with which, though thousands were acquainted with the secret, an organised scheme of revolt, encouraged by some at least of the highest persons in the Catholic Church, was concealed from the strictest investigation. Halifax, at the close of the

[1] 'I can assure you, if his majesty should accidentally lay aside the plan of the Roman Catholic corps, he will hear nothing further of the rioters, who will be considered again what they always were, a rabble destitute of employment and wretched in their circumstances.'—'Halifax to Egremont, April 17, 1762.'

session of 1762, congratulated Parliament on the restoration of order; yet order was not restored. The nightly orgies of the Whiteboys, after Aston's return to Dublin, continued precisely as before. Emboldened by impunity, they became at length so terrible, that for three years they were the lawgivers and masters of Tipperary. The police had no existence. The parish constables were no match for the secret societies, and the scanty garrisons of soldiers were not allowed to be too active. The large landowners were absentees. The magistrates were the smaller gentry, the clergy, and the middlemen. They lived at a distance from each other, and with few servants; and exposed to vengeance in detail, they were too prudent to bring Captain Dwyer's and Joanna's armies on them. Occasional arrests were attempted after some unusually audacious outrage; but the signal vengeance always taken upon informers made legal convictions impossible. Prisoners were rescued from their escorts by armed and disciplined bodies, who attacked them on the roads, and from 1762 to 1765 the central plain of Ireland, from Mallow to Westmeath, was under Captain Dwyer's dictatorship. His rule had its merits. The graziers were brought to their bearings. The landlords, in fear of him, lowered their rents. Unfortunately he had less innocent aims, on which the Whiteboy fortunes were shipwrecked. Presuming on impunity, they attacked a village in Waterford, which was armed and prepared to receive them. They were beaten back, with a loss of thirty or forty men. The gentry recovered courage. Lord Carrick and Lord

Drogheda set themselves at the head of an active combination to restore the regular authority. Bodies were formed of armed volunteers. Where property was destroyed, the baronies were assessed for compensation, and were compelled to pay. High rewards were offered for information, and as law re-asserted itself, the terrors by degrees wore away. It had been evident from the first, to those who knew the country, that more was at work than peasant discontent. As the dread of vengeance was removed, the mystery was at length revealed.

Suspicion had many times been directed to the parish priest of Clogheen, in Tipperary, Father Nicholas Sheehy. In patriotic histories this reverend person is described as of 'Quixotic turn of mind,' with a quick resentment against wrong, and eagerness to redress it. He had made himself conspicuous in the defence of prisoners. His parish was notorious as a Whiteboy centre. It was assumed that he could not be ignorant of the secrets of his flock. More than once he was arrested and indicted under the Registration Act; but the prosecution failed, and Father Nicholas was still at large. At length, after the affair in Waterford, when active measures were resumed, an informer named Bridges disappeared under circumstances which made it certain that he had been murdered. An escort of troops, carrying a prisoner to Clonmel gaol, was set upon near Sheehy's house, and several soldiers were killed. He was suspected of being concerned in the rescue. He was charged with high treason, and

reward of 300*l.* was offered for his capture. Secure of the fidelity of those whose evidence could alone convict him, Father Nicholas wrote to the Secretary, offering to surrender, if he could be tried, not at Clonmel, but in Dublin. The condition was accepted. He was brought to the bar. The evidence was insufficient, and he was triumphantly acquitted. The Lords Justices were certain of his guilt, though, as often happens in Ireland, they could not produce their proofs. There was a second charge, which they believed that they could bring home to him. He was charged with his brother Edmund—Buck Sheehy as the brother was called—with being concerned in the informer's murder. The promise made to him had been observed in the letter, it was, perhaps, broken in the spirit when he was sent back, to be tried for murder, from Dublin to Clonmel.

So great was the excitement, that at the time of the trial the court-house was surrounded by a party of cavalry. The body of Bridges had not been found, and witnesses came forward to swear that he had left the country. It was proved, however, that there had been a conspiracy to murder him, and that the Sheehies knew it. A Mr. Keating, described as a gentleman of property in the county, offered to prove that Father Nicholas was at his house on the night when, if ever, the murder was committed; but Mr. Hewetson, a clergyman and an active magistrate, rose in court, and said that he had a charge against Keating for having been present at the killing of the soldiers. Keating's

evidence was refused, and he was committed to the gaol at Kilkenny. The Sheehies were found guilty, and were both hanged. It was an extreme measure. The breach of faith in returning the prisoner to Tipperary, the military occupation of the town, the non-discovery of the body, and the refusal to hear his witness, led to an impression, even with moderate persons, that he had been unfairly dealt with. Both he and his brother protested their innocence on the scaffold. The Crown counsel, acting on secret information, asked him if the Whiteboys were connected with France or the Pretender. He declared that he had never heard of any such connection, and disbelieved in its existence. Then and afterwards, therefore, the Irish Catholics insisted that Father Sheehy was a murdered man. With a curious paralogism they regarded him as the victim of his love for Ireland, and, at the same time, as guiltless of having shown it; and he was raised on the spot to an honoured place in the Irish martyrology. His tomb became a place of pilgrimage—a scene at which the Catholic Celt could renew annually his vow of vengeance against the assassins of Ireland's saints. The stone which lay above his body was chipped in pieces by enthusiastic relic hunters. The execution is among the stereotyped enormities which justify an undying hatred against the English rule and connection.

Yet the Government essentially was right; and if treason and murder are crimes at all in Ireland, Father Sheehy was as deep a criminal as ever swung from crossbeam. He died as others had died, keeping the

oath of secrecy which he had sworn as a Whiteboy, and going out of the world with a lie upon his lips, to leave a doubt of the justice of his sentence as a stain upon the law which had condemned him. Either to set at rest the misgivings which Sheehy's words had caused, or relieved of their fears by the restored energy of the law, Father O'Brien, the coadjutor of the Archbishop of Cashel, and four other Catholic gentlemen, came forward and revealed, under oath, the inner history of Whiteboyism. Father O'Brien swore to having been told by the Archbishop of Cashel that the rising of the Whiteboys was for the advancement of the Catholic faith and the extirpation of heresy; that as there was but one God, there would soon be but one religion; and that with the help of France the Vetus Hibernia should be restored. A fund had been regularly collected by the Catholic priests in the diocese in support of the movement. The person by whom the money was distributed was Father Nicholas Sheehy. David Landregan swore that he had been made a Whiteboy in 1762; that at his initiation he had sworn to be faithful to the King of France and Prince Charles. Many times he had gone on night expeditions with the Sheehies and their friend Keating. They had meant to murder Lord Carrick, Sir Thomas Maude, and Mr. Hewetson, and had been prevented only by the Sheehies' arrest. Five hundred of them had met one night on the race-course at Clogheen. Lord Drogheda with a detachment of troops was in the town. Father Sheehy had proposed to set it on fire, and destroy them. The

priest of Ardfinnan, as they were about to do it, fell on his knees, and gave them his curse if they moved. 'For,' he said, 'we are not yet ripe for such a blow, nor can we, till Prince Charles and his friends from France land for our assistance. If we attempt it before that time, every Protestant in Ireland will be in arms, and give no quarter to man, woman, or child of us.'

Mr. Rawley, of Tipperary, professed to have been sworn a Whiteboy by the Archbishop himself. Again his oath had been to be faithful to France and Prince Charles. The French were coming, with the Prince at their head, and then Ireland was to rise.

James French had been enlisted by Father Sheehy. He had a commission as major in the Pretender's service, and had received his pay regularly from Father Sheehy's hands. Their principal leaders were four Catholic prelates — the Archbishops of Cashel and Dublin, and the Bishops of Waterford and Cork. At a great meeting at Drumlannon he saw Father Sheehy produce a Bull, which came, as he said, from the Pope, granting pardon and indulgence to any Catholic who might pretend to be a Protestant, 'the better to carry on their enterprise, and restore the Catholic religion.'

Finally, a woman named Mary Butler described the attack on the soldiers. Father Sheehy, she said, though the Dublin jury had acquitted him, was the contriver of the plot and the deviser of its method. The Whiteboys had collected on the road, under pretence of a sham funeral. A sham coffin had been made for them to follow. Sheehy saw them in their places, and then left

them to their work, hurrying off to say mass at his own chapel, that he might be able to prove an alibi.

These depositions were sworn to with the usual formalities before the Mayor of Kilkenny and other magistrates.[1] They proved nothing against the sincerity of the Catholic press and the Catholic merchants of Dublin; but they proved indisputably that there was a second Catholic Ireland, unreconciled and unreconcileable, of the existence of which they were unconscious, and that to trust to these gentlemen as the exponents of the feelings of their countrymen was fond and infatuated credulity.[2]

---

[1] See them in the First Appendix to Musgrave's *History of the Irish Rebellion.*

[2] I have told Father Sheehy's story at some length, on account of the prominence given to it by Irish historians. The celebrated Father O'Leary—the most plausible, and, perhaps, essentially the falsest of all Irish writers—asserted twenty years later that Bridges, for whose murder Sheehy had been hanged, was still alive. Mr. Daniel Toler brought O'Leary's statement before the House of Commons. 'He was himself,' he said. 'High Sheriff of Tipperary when Sheehy suffered. . . . He had empanelled a most respectable jury. Sheehy had been convicted on the fullest and clearest evidence. . . He had visited him afterwards in the gaol, when he confessed that Bridges had been murdered, though he denied that he had himself a hand in it. He had drawn attention to the matter,' Mr. Toler said, 'to detect such agitators as Mr. O'Leary in their falsehood. A cause that required such advocates and such means of defence must be desperate indeed.' —*Irish Debates*, vol. vii. p. 342.

SECTION IV.

The war which was closed by the Peace of Paris, in February, 1763, had cost England more than a hundred millions. Ireland had contributed in proportion to her resources. She had increased her debt by five hundred thousand pounds. She had added fifty thousand a year while the fighting lasted to the half million which was annually expended on her military establishment. So great, and not greater, was the value of Ireland to the empire after six centuries of occupation. The Irish brigade which turned the scale at Fontenoy furnished more than an equivalent on the other side, and reduced her weight to zero. England came out of the conflict with singular glory. Though Pitt resigned before it was over, his genius, as Horace Walpole said, shone still 'like an annihilated star.' The work had been too completely done for Bute and Grenville to spoil it. Ireland lay the while like some ill-kept back premises in the rear of the Imperial mansion, fit only to be concealed, and as far as possible forgotten. She had been in danger of invasion, yet she was left undefended. Forty-two regiments furnished her nominal army contingent. There were not troops enough in the island to keep the peace of Tipperary. The charge for the Ordnance Department was 45,000*l*. The whole artillery in the kingdom would not furnish out a thirty-gun

frigate.[1] The linen trade had been crippled by French cruisers. The Dublin woollen weavers, once decent and well disposed, had taken to drink and oratory. They dropped their work on Saturday afternoon; they were unfit to resume it till Tuesday morning, and they had formed unions to raise the wages rate to make good the lost day. 'Decency in dwelling and apparel, which formerly obtained among them, was almost eradicated. In place of it were idleness, filth, nastiness, with unbounded licentiousness of manners.'[2] The profits of smuggling had declined, through the substitution of horned cattle for sheep. The salt beef and salt butter trade alone flourished, and in flourishing drove the peasantry into rebellion. The Viceroys so detested their occupation, that for six months only in alternate years they could be induced to reside at the Castle. In the interval the country was governed by the Lords Justices, usually from the same families: a Boyle, a Beresford, a Ponsonby, and perhaps the Primate. The Lords Justices' object was to distribute the patronage among their relations, while England's chief concern again appeared to be to quarter on the Irish Pension List such scandalous persons as could not decently be provided for at home.

Such was the beautiful condition of unlucky Ireland when Halifax left it to take his place in Lord Bute's administration. The Earl of Northumberland was sent to Dublin instead of him. The Pension List was likely

[1] *Commons' Journals*, December 3, 1763.
[2] Ibid., February 28, 1764.

to be assailed as soon as Parliament met; and the Cabinet thought it prudent to affect to intend concession. Northumberland was directed to inform 'the principal persons of both Houses that except in cases of a particular nature, of which the King could be the only judge, his majesty did not intend to grant any more pensions either for life or a term of years, and that the King's servants in England did not mean for the future to recommend such grants.' The intimation was designed to anticipate the intemperate action of Parliament. But the Viceroy was not to allow interference. If the Commons brought addresses to him on the subject, he was not to notice them. The prerogative must not be encroached upon, nor any step be taken 'which would cast a public reflection on the past.'[1]

Thus instructed, Northumberland arrived in Dublin in the autumn of 1763. In the speech from the throne he announced the Peace, a reduction of the expenditure and a probable surplus in the revenue. The address in reply was cold, dictated, so Halifax believed, by the malevolence of Speaker Ponsonby. On the second day of the session the anticipated attack was made. A motion was introduced for an examination of the list of persons in receipt of his majesty's bounty. Northumberland, supposing that he was carrying out his orders, met it by the communication which he had been told to convey. He spoke warmly of the King's

[1] 'Halifax to Northumberland, October 22, 1763.' S. P. O.

desire to comply with Ireland's wishes; and the Council, supposing the Cabinet was in earnest, never dreaming that Bute and his fellow-ministers would condescend to trifle with them, sketched a form of grateful acknowledgment in which the House of Commons was to return its thanks.[1] Prepared as he must be for any extremity of folly in the dealings of English Cabinets with the interests of Ireland, the reader will learn without surprise that Bute and his fellow-ministers had never seriously thought of surrendering the pensions at all.

The Viceroy sent over the draft for approval: he was informed in return that he had misconceived his directions. He had received a message which he was to have delivered in private to a few persons whose influence might have prevented discussion in the House of Commons. In making it public he had committed a fatal indiscretion. Angry with Northumberland, angry with the Irish Council, angry with everything but their own scandalous and dishonest purpose, the Cabinet treated the proposed address as an insult to the Crown, 'disgraceful to the chief governor of the kingdom, disrespectful and undutiful to his majesty.' 'The King's goodness,' Halifax wrote, 'required a more grateful

[1] The Irish Parliament was to describe itself 'as full of gratitude for those gracious intentions relating to grants of offices and pensions signified by your majesty to the Lord Lieutenant. Thus anticipating our desire by a provident and watchful care over the interests of your people, your majesty will, in a peculiar manner, distinguish your reign,' &c.

Form enclosed by the Viceroy to Lord Halifax for approval. S. P. O.

return than that he should be compelled to pare and abridge the rights of the Crown by a declaration almost equivalent to an Act of Parliament.'[1]

The childish trifling irritated the growing discontent.
1763 The manœuvring with the Catholics assumed a more sinister complexion when accompanied with so evident a purpose of misappropriating the Irish revenues. The Parliament was unable to perceive in what the 'goodness,' which they were asked to admire, consisted, and the session was spent in a series of violent motions which the utmost efforts of Government were required to defeat. A resolution was passed in November condemning the increase of the Civil List. A committee was appointed to examine the claims of the various gentlemen and ladies for whom Ireland was made to provide, and the enquiry was too dangerous to be encountered.

Northumberland, after so sharp a reprimand, ventured nothing more on his own responsibility. What was he to do? The Lords Justices, he said, promised to prevent the committee from sitting, but he could not trust the Lords Justices. The servants of the Crown were lukewarm. Men in office were found 'dividing on the discontented side in all trying questions.' 'Am I,' he asked, 'to temporize with the present evil and make the best composition I can, or shall I strenuously assert his majesty's prerogative, dismiss these ungrate-

[1] 'Halifax to Northumberland, October, 27, 1763.' S. P. O.

ful servants, and reward others with their places who have deserved well?'[1]

The alternative was between disgraceful humiliation and persistence no less disgraceful in scandalous injustice. The ministry shuffled out of it as best they could. The Viceroy was allowed to confirm the promise that for the present at least the pension giving should be suspended. 'His majesty,' Halifax said (and never was king's name more abused by his ministers), 'was extremely displeased, both with the Lords Justices and his other bad servants. The Cabinet, however, had decided on consideration 'that it would be unwise to throw the public business into confusion by depriving them of their offices.' The Viceroy was left to his discretion, being warned only to avoid pledging the Government to engagements beyond the present session.[2]

Such was English government in Ireland, such the occupation of the Irish Legislature, at a time when even in the richest portion of the island the law was in suspense—when quiet people could not sleep in their beds without a military guard, and the sole authority recognized and obeyed was the Whiteboy Committee. At this moment, under the brief administration of Lord Rockingham, but whether at Rockingham's instance is more than questionable, a light breaks across the scene as if from the blue sky itself. The triumvirate which

[1] 'Northumberland to Halifax, November 10, 1763.' S. P. O.
[2] 'Halifax to Northumberland, November 26.' S. P. O.

had so long monopolized the power and patronage was broken in 1764 by death. Primate Stone died and went to the place appointed for him. Lord Shannon died. Ponsonby only was left. But Shannon's heir and successor was married to Ponsonby's daughter. The faction was likely to re-establish itself under a new form, and to recommence a compact of corruption. The young King appears now to have personally interposed, and tried the experiment whether Ireland might not be managed by open rectitude and real integrity. Northumberland retired after two years. Lord Weymouth was named in his place, but did not come over. Lord Hertford was the next actual Viceroy, and there remains addressed to Hertford and signed by George the Third, a paper of instructions so confidential, so full of references to himself, so entirely different from the ordinary official ambiguities, that they can scarcely be referred to any other source than the King's own mind.

1765

The new Lord Lieutenant was directed to inform himself completely of the true condition of the country and to acquaint the King. He was to attend particularly to the Church; as Crown livings fell vacant he was charged to appoint only pious and orthodox persons who would bind themselves to reside on their benefices, to make other patrons do the same, and thus before all other reforms to see that God Almighty was well served.[1]

[1] I cannot positively state that in the entire correspondence of the Home Government with Dublin Castle there is no other indication of a sense of responsibility on the part of English ministers as to the

The service of God being reformed, the next step was to put an end to fraud. Every public department in Ireland was saturated with dishonesty. There were frauds in the revenue, frauds in the muster reports, frauds in the ordnance and the victualling stores; evasion, jobbery, and peculation, where there was any public property to be stolen and official hand to steal it. These things were to be searched into, and so far as possible to be set upon a better foundation.—So far as possible. But even as the King wrote, it seemed to flash across him how deep the roots of the Upas-tree of corruption, penetrating below the bed of the channel and piercing to his own Cabinet, and even to his own person, if the sign manual could be taken as evidence against him.

'When letters come from us,' he said, 'ordering money to be paid for public uses, and other private letters for the payment of money to particular persons, you will prefer the public letter before the private. Pay no attention to any letter from us granting money or lands, unless on petition previously sent through you, and examined and reported on by competent persons. Give no orders upon any letters of ours, either for pensions, money, lands, or titles of honour, unless such

persons appointed to benefices in the reformed Church of Ireland. I can but say that in the many thousand Irish State Papers which I have examined, covering the connection between the two countries from the accession of Elizabeth to the Union, this is the only such paper which I have found. Was it for an English minister to turn round upon the Establishment and speak of it as the branch of a Upas-tree? Is the Irish Church to blame if it has failed of its mission?

letters have been entered at our signet office. If warrants come to you contrary to these instructions, do not execute them. Should the revenue fall short of the cost of the establishment, you will take care that the same is not applied to the payment of pensions, till the rest is first paid. If there be not enough, you will abate the pensions.'

The remaining orders in this singular document are no less straightforward and characteristic. If genius means an eagerness for change, a wild rushing after new ideas, an enthusiasm for emancipation from restraint, George the Third was the most commonplace of sovereigns. If genius means a loyal recognition of the old and tried principles established by the experience of ages for the guidance of mankind, George the Third was a safer ruler of a great empire than the most accomplished parliamentary rhetorician. He bade Hertford look to judges and magistrates, remove those who neglected their duty, and to fill their places with men of better merit. He gave him power over all officials, of all degrees, to appoint or dismiss. If any man was found to have paid money for an office, he was to be immediately discharged. A sharp eye was to be kept on Papists. The Viceroy must issue a proclamation, bidding them bring in their arms, and deposit them in the arsenals, and he must see the order obeyed. All lawful encouragement was to be given to Protestant strangers resorting to Ireland; if many wished to settle there, 'report to us,' the King said, 'and they shall have all the help we can give.'

The Articles of Limerick and Galway were to be strictly construed. Licenses to the Catholic gentry to have guns or powder were to be conceded rarely, and with special caution. Outlawries were not to be reversed without permission from the Crown.

The disorders had extended to the army. 'Survey all the forts in the kingdom,' the order went on. 'Report to us on the defences and on the stores. See that the troops are quartered so as to create least inconvenience to our subjects. See that the soldiers' pay is not withheld by the officers, and that misconduct, whether in high or low, does not pass unnoticed. If the officers fight duels, cashier them from time to time. Inform such officers as shall send or receive any challenge, or shall affront one another, that they shall never be employed in our service.'

Finally, as if he was conscious where the real difficulty lay, though too young as yet to know it to be insurmountable, he concluded this singular paper with a last injunction :—

'You will not summon a Parliament without our special command.' [1]

The King had struck the key-note of all Ireland's sorrows. How easy, had there been no Parliament, the task of governing Ireland! How easy, with a moderate police, to have distributed equal justice, to have forced the landlords to do their duties; to have forced the people, unexasperated by petty tyranny, to

[1] 'Instructions to the Earl of Hertford from the King, August 9, 1765, abridged. S. P. O.

submit to a law which would have been their friend! How easy to have punished corruption, to have blown away the malaria which enveloped the public departments; to have established schools; to have dealt equal measure to loyal subjects of every creed! The empire which the genius of Clive won for England presented a problem of government harder far than Ireland presented. Yet British faculty found means to solve it. What enchantment had condemned Ireland to be the victim of a constitution of which chicanery, injustice, anarchy, and moral dissolution were the inevitable fruits? Infinitely happier it would have been for Ireland—happier, better, even cheaper in the long run for England, could her ministers have adopted loyally the scheme of government sketched by the King, have dispensed with Parliament, fallen back on the hereditary revenue, and made good the deficiency out of the English exchequer. But even this method, too, it is likely that parliamentary exigencies in England would soon have degraded to the old level.

Reform, at any rate, was not attainable on the honest road which had been traced by the King; nor was Hertford, an absentee nobleman, and one of the unconscious instruments of the worst disorders of the country, a person to be trusted for such a purpose. An attempt was to be made to crush the oligarchy of the Shannons and Ponsonbies. The old vicious circle was to be broken through, but by such means as were available under the constitution. Hertford retreated, after a brief ineffectual rule—the last of the Viceroys whose

presence at the Castle was limited to the parliamentary session. Thus much was recognized, that thenceforward the representative of the Crown must be a permanent resident; that the Lords Justices must be dispensed with, except for accidental exigencies, and the patronage be distributed by the Lord Lieutenant. It was a nice operation, requiring courage, dexterity, discretion, firmness, qualities social and intellectual not often combined. Lord Bristol was first thought of. He accepted the office, and prepared to enter on it; but the longer he looked at what was expected from him, the less he liked the prospect. Lord Bristol's most important act of authority was to appoint his brother Frederic to the Bishopric of Cloyne—of all misuses of Irish Church patronage the grossest instance. He died soon after, and the bishop succeeded to the earldom, to play a memorable part in the development of the coming drama. The nobleman finally selected to carry out the intended alterations in the Irish Government was Lord Townshend, distinguished hitherto as a soldier, grandson of Walpole's Townshend, and brother of Charles, who was now English Chancellor of the Exchequer.

SECTION V.

A FEW more words of prelude are necessary before we enter on the remarkable administration which was to form an epoch in Irish history. It has been sufficient so far to notice the general drift of the stream, on the surface of which individuals are seen occupied in paltry schemes to improve their own fortunes, not one of them as yet, however, with sufficient power to influence materially the policy or the fate of the country. The practical force in the Parliament was in the hands of a few families, who nominated the majority of the representatives. No questions had as yet been stirred on which the people were passionately interested; and minor scandals had been made use of only as a means of embarrassing the Government. On the edge of a great change, we pause for a moment to notice a few persons, some of whom had made themselves felt already as troublesome, and were about to pass to the front of the stage; some still obscure and unheard of, but meditating in the enthusiasm of passionate youth on Ireland's miseries, and dreaming of coming revolutions.

First in rank was the Duke of Leinster, and individually the first in influence. The House of Kildare was the most powerful in Ireland, and the head of it was the natural leader of the Irish people. But the Kildares, at all periods of their history, preferred to rule alone or not at all. Many times the Viceroys had

attempted to draw them into combination with other parties, but always without success. The Duke of Bedford laboured hard with the reigning Earl, but the Earl refused to work with the Ponsonbies. Once only, for a few months, he tried the office of Lord Justice, and had retired, leaving the field to his rivals; while his ambition had been gratified, and his mortification soothed, by special distinction in the peerage. In 1761 he was made a marquis. In 1766 he was created duke, being then about fifty-six years old, the one duke of which Ireland could boast. He was married to a daughter of the Duke of Richmond, and was the father of seventeen children, one of whom, born in 1763, and thus three years old when Lord Townshend came to Dublin, became known to the world thirty-five years later as Lord Edward Fitzgerald.

Lord Shannon's father, the reader will remember as Henry Boyle, Speaker of the House of Commons, who, after heading the opposition to the Government, sold his patriotism for an earldom and a pension. His son Richard, who succeeded to the title in 1764, was a politician of his father's school, under forty, with his life still before him, married to Speaker Ponsonby's daughter, and aiming steadily with the Ponsonby alliance at controlling the Castle, and dispensing the patronage of ministers. He had enormous wealth, and in private made an honourable use of it. Arthur Young, who visited him at Castle Martyr in 1771, speaks with unusual enthusiasm of his merit as an Irish landlord.

Next in consequence to Lord Shannon was the

Speaker, the Right Honourable John Ponsonby, second brother of the Earl of Bessborough. The Duke of Devonshire had been twice Viceroy—in 1737 and 1743. Lord Hartington was Viceroy in 1755. The long presence of the Cavendish family at the Castle was favourable to the Ponsonby fortunes. Lord Bessborough married one of the duke's daughters, and was Lord Justice in 1756. John Ponsonby married another, became Speaker when Boyle was raised to the peerage, and was made Lord Justice also. The links of the family compact are easily visible. The virtual sovereigns of Ireland threatened to become hereditary. From this John Ponsonby came George, afterwards friend of his country and Lord Chancellor, who was now a boy of eleven.

Of the House of Commons' orators who had made names must be mentioned—

1. Mr. Hely Hutchinson, a barrister of large practice, who had risen in his profession through a seat in Parliament, and had become known as a patriot orator. Speaking and voting against Government, less on principle than as the surest road to advancement, on the appropriation of the surplus, the Pension and the Septennial Bills, Mr. Hutchinson had shown that he could be dangerous. In practical business he had made himself really useful, so far as was compatible with attention to himself.

2. Mr. Sexton Pery, a lawyer also, and the son of a Limerick clergyman, represented his native city. He, too, was a patriot, and had earned impatient notice in

the letters of Viceroys and Secretaries. He had been tempted with the Solicitor-Generalship, and had refused it. It was assumed that, like others, he was purchasable, but the Government had not yet discovered at what price he could be secured.

3. A third barrister, remarkable in himself, and remarkable as the father of a more celebrated son, was John Fitzgibbon. He, like Pery, came from Limerick, but from the cabin of a Catholic peasant. The Fitzgibbons were of Norman blood, once wealthy and powerful, but now reduced by forfeitures, and there remained of them only a few families, renting their few acres of potato garden on the estates of their ancestors. Young John, in defiance of the law, had been sent to Paris to be educated, and was intended for a priest. He had no taste for the priestly calling. The Catholic religion itself became incredible to him. He went to London, found means of studying law, and brought himself into notice, while still keeping his terms, by publishing a volume of Reports. Admitted to the Irish bar, he rose early into practice, realized a considerable fortune, and bought a large estate at Mountshannon, in his native county. He sat in Parliament for Newcastle, in the county of Dublin, and he stood almost alone in desiring nothing which Castle favour could give, aspiring to no rank, and content with the wealth which he had earned. To a Government which had aimed at ruling Ireland by honest methods, the elder Fitzgibbon would have been an invaluable servant; to the Halifaxes and Northumberlands, though

he never stooped to factious opposition, he was an object of suspicion and dislike. John Fitzgibbon the younger, who grew to be Chancellor and Earl of Clare, was born in 1748, and was now gaining his early laurels at Trinity College.

Noticeable, however, beyond all his contemporaries, already prominent in the House of Commons, already concentrating in himself the passionate hopes of all young generous-minded Irishmen, was the celebrated Henry Flood. Like the younger Fitzgibbon, Flood was born into a position which secured him from the temptation of making politics a trade. His father, Warden Flood, was Chief Justice of the King's Bench, and as Attorney-General had amassed considerable property. Henry, the eldest son, was born in 1732. He passed without particular distinction through the Irish University. From Dublin he went as a gentleman commoner to Oxford, where he became noted rather as an ornamental youth of letters than as an aspirant for University honours. Irish genius runs naturally to words. Henry Flood was a student of Demosthenes, and his special ambition was to be an orator. His enslaved and unhappy country weighed upon his spirits. She was in bondage; the chains cramped her limbs, and therefore she was miserable. She pined for liberty, and liberty, as Flood understood it, 'was the child of eloquence.' Not by hard attention to the facts of life; not by submission to the inflexible laws which must be obeyed before they will be our servants; not by patient undoing the triple-stranded cord of idleness, extrava-

gance, and anarchy, in which the object of his affection was truly held in servitude; not by these, but on the short bright road of bounding oratory lay Ireland's path towards redemption. Let parliamentary eloquence breathe into the souls of her people, and the foul enchantment would disappear, and Ireland would rise up in her native loveliness. With these ideas in him, and with an estate of 5000*l.* a year to fall to him on his father's death, Henry Flood, being then twenty-seven years old, entered Parliament as member for Kilkenny in 1759. He was re-elected on the King's death for the same county, and, with a handsome figure, a rich sonorous voice, and a mind stored with the phrases which millions of young Irish hearts were then prepared to accept as the Open Sesame of Paradise, he became at once the idol of Irish patriotism, catching the torch which was dropping from the failing hand of Charles Lucas, and eclipsing alike the waning brilliancy of Anthony Malone and the meridian splendour of Hely Hutchinson.

Other eminent persons will be heard of in front places on the stage of Irish politics. For special reasons, those which have been mentioned must particularly be borne in mind; and there must be added to the list the name of another young man, then the rival of John Fitzgibbon at Trinity College—as he was his rival afterwards on the broader platform of life. Grattan has been beatified by tradition as the saviour of his country. In his own land his memory is adored. His glittering declamations are studied as models of oratory wherever

the English language is spoken. Fitzgibbon is the object of a no less intense national execration. He was followed to his grave with curses, and dead cats were flung upon his coffin. If undaunted courage, if the power to recognize and the will to act upon unpalatable truths, if the steady preference of fact to falsehood, if a resolution to oppose at all hazards those wild illusions which have lain at all times at the root of Ireland's unhappiness, be the constituents of greatness in an Irish statesman, Grattan and Fitzgibbon are likely hereafter to change places in the final estimate of history.

Grattan was the elder by two years. His father also was in Parliament. He was Recorder of Dublin and member for the city. John Fitzgibbon was born in 1748, Henry Grattan in 1746. They were at school together, and afterwards at college, where both carried off the highest prizes. From Trinity they went to London, to study law at the Temple, but here their paths divided. Grattan was left fatherless when he was under nineteen. He inherited little property, and had his own fortune to make for himself; but he disliked the bar, and remained for some time uncertain what career he should adopt. Fitzgibbon was heir to a large estate; but he threw himself earnestly into his profession, and long before the Counsellor died was in the first flight of Irish lawyers.

The parliamentary life of these two young men had yet to begin. Let it be understood that their manhood was maturing and their minds were forming in the scenes about to be described.

CHAPTER II.

LORD TOWNSHEND'S ADMINISTRATION.

SECTION I.

GEORGE, third Viscount Townshend, was selected as Viceroy of Ireland in the summer of 1767, under the last administration of Lord Chatham, having just succeeded to the title by his father's death. His career in the army had been creditable, if not particularly brilliant. He was with Wolfe on the heights of Abraham, and General Monckton, the second in command, having been carried off wounded early in the action, Townshend, when Wolfe fell, became superior officer, and signed the capitulation of Quebec.[1] His brother Charles died immediately after his nomination, and in the first sorrow for the loss of father and brother he entered upon his intricate office. In appearance the new Viceroy was a *bon vivant;* in his manners easy; in his conversation humorous, and

1767

[1] The popular leaders in Ireland charged Townshend with having cheated Monckton of his laurels, and stolen an honour to which he had no claim. History, in the hands of Irish writers, has often a tendency to become mythological. See *Baratariana*, p. 94.

seemingly frank and transparent. He was as ready with a proverb as Sancho Panza,[1] and let fall, it was said, in half an hour, and as it were by accident, more good things than could be heard in a session even of the Irish Parliament, where wit was never wanting. Besides these qualities he had others undiscovered by the patriots whose object he defeated. He displays in his letters an unusually noble disposition, a contempt approaching to loathing for the measures to which he was compelled to stoop, and for the men whom he was obliged to conciliate by the necessities of Parliamentary Government. The King adhered to the views expressed in his instructions to Hertford, and Townshend had come with a loyal intention to put an end, as far as possible, to Irish jobbery and Irish anarchy. Pitt's Government had resolved in sincerity to have done with pensions, sinecure offices, and bribery. The promise which Halifax had allowed Northumberland to give dishonestly, Townshend was really to act upon. The Irish politicians were to have an opportunity of showing whether their complaints had been sincere, whether they were prepared to co-operate loyally and without the need of underhand influence in measures of genuine reform.

The first necessity was to protect the public peace. The Whiteboys were scarcely quieted in the south: when the gentry relaxed their efforts, disturbances would inevitably recommence. Landlord exactions had

[1] This peculiarity was the occasion of the name Barataria being given to Ireland in the squibs and essays published by Flood and his friends.

provoked a convulsion, presently to be described, in Ulster, with which the magistrates were no less unable to cope. It had been determined, if Parliament would consent, to add three thousand men to the ordinary garrison to do the work of police. Again, the Irish judges, like the judges in the colonies, had hitherto held office during pleasure. English ministers had been peculiarly tenacious of the power to remove them at will. Townshend had come prepared to assimilate their tenure to that of their brethren on the English bench. The Irish Parliament had played fast and loose with the Septennial Bill, and in their hearts desired it should never more be heard of. The Cabinet had concluded that it was a measure which ought to be passed. Lord Hertford, before taking leave, had said that he should recommend the change, and the new Viceroy had brought full powers to give it Government support. Here were three considerable reforms, the first of supreme importance, which the Irish patriots, if they were really anxious for their country's good, had an opportunity of securing with the full assent of England. There had been a difference of opinion about the others, or at least how far the Government should take the initiative in proposing them. Townshend met Parliament with the impression that he had been instructed to commend the alteration of the judges' tenure to immediate attention.

The session began on the 20th of October. The speech from the throne was brief, but it contained a distinct mention of this particular point, and it promised

generally and significantly that the King would consent to any other measures which might promote the welfare and prosperity of the country.

Chatham was too ill to attend to business, and even when the intention was good, Irish affairs were carelessly regarded by the rest of the Cabinet. Lord Shelburne considered that the subject had been opened too abruptly; he would have preferred that the Viceroy should have felt his way more cautiously; and he intimated, perhaps by an error of the pen, that the intention was to appoint the Irish judges, not during good behaviour as in England, but for life.[1] The Septennial Bill, if introduced at all, was to be made octennial.

Townshend warmly defended himself. In what he had said about the judges, he maintained that he had rather fallen short of his instructions than exceeded them; and as to a life tenure, places held for life were openly bought and sold in Ireland. He regretted, not, as will be seen, without reason, that he had been unable to mention the Septennial Bill, but he was prepared to encourage it in its new form with all his powers.

---

[1] 'We are all astonished to find mention in your speech of your having it in charge from his majesty to recommend a provision to secure the judges in their offices during good behaviour. We approved the measure, but advised you to use general words. You were instructed to talk confidentially of the determination of Government to support the Septennial Bill, and the judges for life. . . We must have the bill for limiting the duration of Parliaments for eight years, instead of seven, to avoid the confusion of a general election in both kingdoms the same year. Shelburne to Townshend, October 29—November 5.' S. P. O.

The Irish politicians were perplexed to know how to behave in their new situation. They had discovered that there were to be no more sinecures and pensions, and they had something real to complain of in the manner in which the lucrative offices of state had been hitherto disposed of out of the country. Their best preferments, treasurerships, vice-treasurerships, commissionerships, were conferred by prime ministers upon their supporters in England, who took the salaries and left the duties to be discharged by deputy,[1] and of high patronage there was little left for them to expect. They had discovered that the point on which the King was most anxious was the augmentation of the army. 'Mankind,' reported the Viceroy, 'judge pretty well how to time their requests.' If members were not to be pensioned, if sinecures were to be abolished, and if their only prizes were to be bestowed in England, something or other must be found to make it worth their while to meet the King's wishes. They found difficulties. They discovered wrongs, real or imaginary. The tenure of judges had been a foremost grievance so long as the change was refused. Now that their wish was complied with, it was treated as of no consequence. They themselves detested the Septennial Bill; but when the speech was silent upon it, they discovered that England was purposely thwarting an important

[1] At this time the Lord Treasurer of Ireland was the Duke of Devonshire; Rigby and Welbore Ellis were Vice-Treasurers; William Gerard Hamilton was Chancellor of the Exchequer; Rigby—fortunate man!—was also Irish Master of the Rolls.

reform.[1] The Chancellorship was vacant. Lord Bowes had been three months dead. The Cabinet was pausing over his successor. The Irish lawyers had a well-founded suspicion that the most brilliant prize of their profession was again to be given to a stranger.

The Viceroy knew what they meant, and did not expect them to be angels. 'As so large a share,' he wrote to Shelburne, 'of the principal offices and emoluments have not been disposed of in this country, your lordship may think it probable I should hear of these circumstances when the Crown has an object in view. It may prove expedient, when men of first-rate abilities are forming expectations, that I should transmit their wishes.'[2]

Townshend had brought with him the feelings of an Englishman who did not yet understand the country. He had supposed the Irish Parliament had been sincere in their complaint of the Pension List. Their objection had been only to the disposition of a fund in favour of royal bastards, mistresses, and favourites, which they would have preferred to share among themselves. They were about to open his eyes with some rudeness to their real views. He was in the act of recommending the claims of their leaders to Shelburne's consideration when Philip Tisdall, the Attorney-General, came into his room and abruptly told him 'that besides an address on the vacancy of the Great Seal which would probably

[1] *Baratariana*, page 17.

[2] 'Townshend to Shelburne, November 15. Secret and separate.' S. P. O.

be carried, a motion would be made in the House of Commons, which could not be resisted, for a short Supply Bill.' Here was a reception for a Viceroy who had come to end corruption and malpractices! He called a meeting of the council. The Lords Justices, the Earl of Shannon, and the Speaker, with the most perfect coolness, confirmed Tisdall's words. 'The discontent was so great,' they said, 'that it was impossible to stem the torrent.' The Commons 'considered the refusal of the Money Bill to be the only certain method of obtaining those popular bills which had been so often demanded and so constantly refused.'

The ground of action was more singular than the action itself. The Judges' Tenure Bill had been spontaneously offered. The Septennial Bill had been rather approved than disapproved. It had been postponed hitherto at the desire of the men who in Parliament had affected to demand it. They had but to ask now to have their wishes immediately gratified, and yet Malone, who was out of office, was the only member of council who would say that he thought the passing of a short Supply Bill would be an improper measure.

'I cannot express my surprise,' Townshend said in reporting the scene, 'at finding myself in the midst of the King's servants, and hearing a question of this sort treated by a part of them in this manner, and a day pressed for the consideration of a measure which ought to have been rejected with indignation.' [1]

[1] 'Townshend to Shelburne, November 15. Secret and separate.' S. P. O.

The real meaning of the opposition was of course evident. A Chancellor had been already chosen, an Englishman as the Irish anticipated, and the Cabinet did not intend to reverse their selection. Hewett, one of the judges of the Court of King's Bench, was coming over with the title of Lord Lifford. 'His known attachment to Revolution principles, great knowledge, and unspotted integrity,' were considered his sufficient recommendation. Lord Shelburne replied to Townshend's unpleasant news, that the King could not but feel 'amazement at such extraordinary behaviour, when he had meant so well.' 'A short Money Bill struck at the very being of Government.' 'The effect could only be the rejection of the Bills which were the pretended object.' 'The public,' Shelburne hoped, 'would soon see through the flimsy pretext of the contrivers, and punish them as they deserved.' 'Altogether it was one of the meanest stratagems which low cunning, narrow parts, and interested motives, could suggest to any set of men in public affairs.' If the Parliament was to continue, however, the hungry expectants must be fed in some way. 'The King,' Shelburne said, 'did not think proper to recede from his resolution with regard to places, pensions, and reversions. Yet his majesty would consider such other just marks of his countenance and protection as at the end of the session might be recommended.' There were still peerages, inferior commissionerships, and professional offices of various kinds for those who would support the Government against faction.[1]

[1] 'Shelburne to Townshend, November 24, 1767. Secret.' S. P. O.

The Shannon-Ponsonby party in the Council had exhibited their strength; and were satisfied for the moment with having shown that if Ireland was to be reformed it was not to be at their expense. The opposition to the Money Bill was withdrawn. An adverse motion by Flood on the appointment of Lord Lifford was rejected by a large majority; and the heads of a Septennial or Octennial Bill were passed for transmission to England. This time they were carried to the Castle by the Speaker in the usual form, with the entire House in attendance. An Absentee Tax was revived in the Money Bill—a tax of four shillings in the pound on all pensions, salaries, and profits of employments payable to persons not resident in Ireland. Imposed originally under George the First, it had been accompanied with a power to the Crown to grant exemptions under the sign-manual. The exemptions had been so numerous that the results had proved 'very inconsiderable.' 'The tax bore hard on individuals who most wanted favour, and had not interest to procure it,' and had been allowed to fall through. It was now replaced without the reservation; the only exceptions permitted being in the case of pensions to the royal family, or to officers who had specially distinguished themselves. To a proposal so definitely just, Townshend offered no opposition, and in private gave it his full approval. The heads of the Judges' Tenure Bill were passed also, but international jealousy on both sides interfered with its success. It had been drawn on the English precedent, and contained a clause

for the possible removal of the Judges of Ireland 'on the representation of the Privy Council and the Houses of Lords and Commons.' What did Lords and Commons mean? The Irish Parliament claimed the power of removal to themselves exclusively. The Council, who could alter bills before transmission, was induced with difficulty to allow joint authority to the Lords and Commons of England. Townshend, perhaps under instructions from Shelburne, who was still resenting the short Money Bill, desired to secure a separate power over the judges to the English Parliament, whether the Irish Parliament consented or refused. The Council begged him not to insist on an alteration which would be fatal to the measure, and the bill was allowed to go as the Council left it. Had the Irish Parliament behaved decently at the beginning of the session, they could have drawn the heads in their own form, and no difficulty would have been made. As matters stood, there was a probability that the heads of the bill might not be returned to them.[1]

The usual pause now followed. Heads of bills were discussed in the autumn, sent to England to be considered and revised, and on their return, at the beginning of the year, were re-debated, and either passed or rejected. The 'servants of the Crown' took advantage of the recess to clear up their relations with the Viceroy. They had taught him, as they supposed, that he could not govern without them. They desired to make

[1] 'Townshend to Shelburne, December 28, 1767. Secret and confidential.'

him finally understand the terms on which he might calculate on their support. Lord Shannon, the Speaker, and Mr. Hely Hutchinson requested a private interview, and defined their expectations. Ignorant that the powers of the Lords Justices were henceforth to be no more real than they had become in England, Ponsonby and his son-in-law demanded to have their offices continued to them. Hely Hutchinson was for himself unambitious: he was Prime Sergeant; he had a lucrative practice, and a private fortune independent of it; he asked for some provision for his two sons,[1] either by place or pension, and 'his wife, at the end of the session, to be created a viscountess.' On these terms, and not otherwise, these distinguished persons were prepared to carry Townshend through his parliamentary difficulties, and to defend the supremely important measure which, in the critical temper of the House of Commons, had not yet been brought forward — the augmentation of the army.

Ponsonby and Shannon together commanded a majority in the House. Hely Hutchinson, the Viceroy said, 'was the most powerful man in Parliament, of great abilities to conduct a debate.'[2] Whether a bargain thus unblushingly offered was to be submitted to, he referred to the consideration of the King.

The negotiation could not wholly be kept secret.

[1] Richard, then eleven years old, created afterwards Earl of Donoughmore; and Henry, a year younger, who, as Lord Hutchinson, succeeded Abercrombie in command of the army in Egypt.

[2] 'Townshend to Shelburne, December 2, 1767. Secret and separate.'

It was whispered in the political circles of Dublin. The apostasy of the triumvirate would for a time destroy the party who called themselves the defenders of their country; and Henry Flood and his friends, who as yet lay outside the lines of promotion, and were fired with patriotic indignation, commenced a series of letters in the Dublin journals, in which Ireland appears as Barataria, Townshend as Sancho, and the various members of the Council as officers of his household. Of Ponsonby they had evidently good hopes. He was applauded for his past virtues, but was made to understand that he was on his trial before the country. The Prime Sergeant Rufinus was regarded with deep, and, it must be allowed, deserved, suspicion.[1]

When the mysteries of parliamentary government are hereafter revealed, it will be known how far such overtures form a sample of the methods in which in other countries besides Ireland free institutions can be made to work. Shelburne expressed less surprise than disgust. He complained of the Absentee tax, but let it pass. The Judges' Tenure Bill was rejected. The chance had been thrown away. The augmentation of the army was the essential thing. 'The internal state of Ireland' made an increase of force absolutely necessary; yet it was unendurable to submit to dictation—dictation so gross and unprincipled. 'We cannot recommend the King,' Shelburne said, 'to grant places and pensions for life or years. The leading persons in

[1] *Baratariana*, letters 1, 2, 3.

Ireland must act as they can answer to their consciences and as representatives of their country. The King will certainly, at the end of the session, take into consideration the merits of those who shall have exerted themselves for the support of his Government and the good of Ireland. Nor can the conduct of those who shall have acted from motives of a less honourable nature escape his majesty's notice.'[1]

Townshend wholly agreed as to the duty of 'the leading persons of Ireland.' The increase of the army was required to keep the peace, and prevent murder and rape, and cattle-houghing. The lords and gentlemen might have been expected to further it for their own sakes. 'But being on the spot,' Townshend said, 'and seeing the general disposition of the House of Commons in its true light, I cannot be so sanguine as to hope that these sentiments are sufficient grounds on which a measure of this sort is to be brought into Parliament, and carried through with success. I know his majesty did not mean to grant more pensions, nor could I give them hopes, though I could not help listening to their proposals. But when I observed how very weak this Government had become, I thought it my duty to submit the matter again to his majesty, being convinced that until the system of government here can be totally changed, and the true weight and interest of the Crown brought back to its former channel, there must be some relaxation of this rule. I am

[1] 'Shelburne to Townshend, December, 1767.'

sorry, therefore, you feel yourself precluded from recommending anything of this sort to his majesty. I am afraid strict adherence to the rule will at this time be a great prejudice to his majesty's service.'[1]

The applicants for corruption received their answer. They enquired whether the augmentation was to be pressed. They were informed that it would be pressed. Hutchinson, speaking for the others, declared coolly that Shannon and Ponsonby would oppose, that without them it could not be carried, and that every art would be used to prejudice the people against a measure which would be represented as a conspiracy against their liberties. Even yet unable to realize the character of Irish politicians, the Viceroy appealed to the Privy Council, and in the most serious language entreated them to remember their obligations. Ponsonby answered ambiguously. Hutchinson and the Attorney-General[2] showed that nothing better was to be expected of them. On the re-assemblage of the Houses, a hostile motion was introduced by Pery for a committee to enquire into the state of the army, and was allowed to pass unresisted. The Viceroy remonstrated again with Lord Shannon. Lord Shannon let him see that the proposed conditions must be conceded. 'You will see,' Townshend wrote, 'that those who offered to assist under such terms as upon due consideration were rejected, have gone into determined opposition to the King's Government itself. What shall I

1768

[1] 'Townshend to Shelburne, January 3, 1768. Secret.'

[2] Tisdall.

do? Shall I apply to those who are generally in opposition, and are called the independent gentry of this country? Shall I prorogue? I doubt whether any other course will prevent things from being carried to lengths that we shall not hereafter be able to remedy.'[1]

The situation was too intricate to be decided from England. The true answer should have been the dismissal of a body in whom patriotic feeling was smothered in self-interest, and the restoration of order and security by a stringent police. It was an answer, however, which England, with her iniquitous trade laws, her scandalous misappropriation of Irish offices, her long contemptuous neglect of every duty which a ruling country owed to an annexed dependency, was in no condition to give. Shelburne left Townshend to his own judgment, merely saying, that neither the King nor the Cabinet 'had any predilection for any man or set of men, having nothing else in view than to conduct the King's affairs honourably and safely. If the business could be carried on by the men at present in office, they would prefer that there should be no change. If the King's servants refused to give solid support, the Viceroy might send for the independent gentlemen. If the House of Commons persisted in passing offensive measures, the Cabinet were unanimously of opinion that he should prorogue.'[2]

Meantime the Septennial Bill returned, changed only to Octennial, for the reasons given before by Lord

[1] 'Townshend to Shelburne, January 26. Secret.'

[2] 'Shelburne to Townshend, February 10, 1768.'

Shelburne. The agitators, though they knew that the Bill was coming back to them, had professed to believe that it would be again rejected. A motion had been proposed, which Flood noisily supported, that he, with Lucas and William Ponsonby,[1] should cross to England and demand it at the Council doors. Hutchinson, to clear himself of suspicion of want of patriotism, had spoken violently against the augmentation of the army, and had proposed an Irish militia instead. Others, with characteristic impudence, renewed their clamours against the Pension List. The appearance of the Octennial Bill shamed these passionate gentlemen for the moment into something like silence. The Viceroy had taken advantage quietly of the feud between the Fitzgeralds and the Ponsonbies to pay court to the Duke of Leinster. The Duke came to his support, and carried with him many of the country gentlemen.[2] The threatened committee of enquiry was dropped. The House voted an address of thanks for the Octennial Bill; and if the army question could be got over, the session, after all, might come to a quiet end.

[1] The Speaker's eldest son.

[2] 'Townshend to Shelburne, February 16.' A curious fear had been expressed by the independent members that if they voted for the Army Bill, 'the weight of the Crown would be exerted against them hereafter by those whose designs they would now defeat by the support of the Government.' They feared, that is, that Lord Shannon and the Speaker would continue Lords Justices when Townshend went back to England, and they would be left at their mercy. It was the same complaint, in another form, which the loyal gentlemen of the Pale used to make to the ministers of Henry VIII. If they supported an English Viceroy against the Irish clans, the Government, sooner or later, would tire of its efforts, and leave them to be destroyed by the Geraldines.

The passing of the Octennial Bill would be followed immediately by a general election. Suspicions had been deliberately excited among the people that the Government had sinister intentions in desiring to add to the troops; and Townshend's best friends advised him to postpone so critical a subject as the augmentation of the army to another session. Townshend himself was strongly of the same opinion. He sent his secretary, Lord Frederick Campbell, to London, to endeavour to persuade the Cabinet. As a matter of party management, he was probably right. But the shameful anarchy which ruled undisturbed in so many parts of the country had shocked the King too deeply to allow him to listen. Come what would, there should be an end to murder and brigandage. Shelburne ordered Townshend to persevere at all risks, and to assure the independent members that their services should be remembered, if they stood by him in beating down an opposition which was the more abominable from the affectation of patriotism in which it was disguised.[1]

Townshend by this time understood Ireland. He complied, but he guessed what would follow. On the 19th of April a message was sent to the Commons in the name of the Crown, that three thousand additional soldiers were required for the defence of the country; the Absentee Tax would suffice to meet the expense, and no fresh burden would be thrown upon the people; his majesty, therefore, confidently relied on the willing

[1] 'Shelburne to Townshend, March 14.' S. P. O.

consent of the Irish legislature. The oligarchy had committed themselves too deeply to retract. If they yielded, their power was at an end. The usual cries were raised of Ireland's liberty being in danger. Shannon, Ponsonby, Tisdall, Hutchinson, in public and private, by themselves and their friends, played on the childish passions of the Irish people. In a full House, on the motion of the brilliant enthusiast, who aspired to be Ireland's champion, Mr Flood, the Government was defeated.

The struggle was for life and death. England was too apt to forget her Irish friends, especially when their efforts were unsuccessful. Townshend thought it necessary to remind the Cabinet immediately that they must keep their promises to those who had stood by him, and who would otherwise be sacrificed to the resentment of the coalition. He considered for a week before he could decide on the course which it would now be desirable to follow.

'When the King,' he wrote at length to Shelburne, 'comes to reflect on certain passages in my letters to your lordship, his majesty can be no stranger to the scandalous causes of the late miscarriage. It was clearly made out that so far from any additional vote of credit being needed, the money already voted would be sufficient till Parliament should meet again to answer the whole expense of the estimates. . . . You must now be convinced on what grounds many of the leading interests of this kingdom have hitherto undertaken to carry on his majesty's affairs; and why, when diffi-

culties have arisen, or have been artificially created, Government has generally been defeated by its own strength. . . . The most effectual means to restore vigour to the Government would be to keep Ireland under the constant attention of a resident governor in whose hands should be placed the absolute disposal of the several offices of revenue. The commissioners exercise great weight over the officers under them, for whose conduct on this occasion I cannot otherwise account. As this will operate but slowly, however, I should wish to know whether, in the different branches of his majesty's service, some persons ought not to be immediately marked as particular objects of displeasure. Many distinguished persons have supported us through the session without hinting at any consideration: though their judgment was against pressing the Augmentation Bill, they yet hazarded their elections in supporting it. I am not without hope that when it shall be observed that his majesty's disapprobation is strongly shown to the principal opposers of so salutary a measure, the tide of popular resentment will turn against those who have endeavoured to direct it against Government.'[1]

The country was already preparing for a general election. 'Every county and borough was a scene of dissipation and animosity.' Candidates were flying to and fro, bribing, treating, and spouting patriotism and Ireland's rights. French-Irish priests, officers of the Irish Brigade, apostles of anarchy of all sorts were

[1] 'Townshend to Shelburne, May 10, 1768.'

scenting the approaching battle, coming over in disguise, and 'feeling the pulses of the community.' On all grounds it was desirable to shorten the dangerous period.[1] The Viceroy demanded and obtained permission to bring it to an immediate end. The bills already passed through committee received the royal assent. Parliament was dissolved, and writs were instantly issued for a new election. Five serviceable members of the late House were recommended for peerages and obtained them.[2] Lord Kingston received an earldom, the Viceroy insisting that striking evidence of this kind was necessary to show that the King meant to proportion his rewards to public desert. The Doneraile title was extinct. Two collateral St. Legers were applying for it, both of whom were likely to be elected members of the House of Commons. They were put on their good behaviour for the next session: whichever of them served the Government best should receive the prize.

'This is now the crisis of Irish Government,' wrote Townshend. 'If a system is at this time wisely formed and steadily pursued, his majesty's affairs may hereafter be carried on with ease, dignity, and safety; but if only a few changes are made here and there, and this particular man is to be raised and another depressed, probably to be restored again in a few months, as in

[1] 'Townshend to Shelburne, May 17, 1768.'

[2] Thomas Dawson was created Lord Dartry; W. H. Dawson, of Queen's County, Lord Dawson; Abraham Crichton Lord Erne: John Eyre, of Eyre Court, Lord Eyre; and Mr. Cosby, of Stradbally, Lord Sydney.

1755,[1] with double powers and weight, it will only add fuel to the fire, and at last bring the King's authority in Ireland, low as it is, into still greater contempt. If the plan which I have proposed shall be adopted, and the King and his servants have that confidence in me as to think I am a fit person to carry it into execution, his majesty will, I hope, allow me by degrees and on proper occasions to submit to him such changes as shall appear to me necessary.'[2]

[1] When Lord Shannon got his peerage.

[2] 'Townshend to Shelburne, May 31, 1768.'

SECTION II.

NOTWITHSTANDING the dissoluteness of the Dublin workmen, the factiousness of the patriots, and the social disorders which had assumed so menacing an appearance, the material prosperity of Ireland had for twenty years been slowly increasing. The Peace of Aix la Chapelle was the turning point at which, in parts at least of the island, the people began to lay aside their dreams and turn to industry. Even the Whiteboy movement, caused as it had been by the increase of cattle and the rise of rents, was a result and symptom of the upward tendency. The linen manufacture was growing in Ulster. Intelligent country gentlemen were building houses, planting, draining, and raising green crops. Arthur Young, who travelled through the country in 1771, found universally the term of twenty years defined as that at which the improvement had commenced which was still in progress. The year which followed the dissolution of 1768 was the most productive which had been known for a century; and had the state of public opinion permitted England to recognize that a Parliament was at all times a curse to Ireland and not a blessing; could she have perceived at the same time, without waiting to be taught by calamity, the folly and iniquity of her trade laws, the permanent regeneration of Ireland might have dated from that period.

1769

It was not to be. A new Parliament was elected, but it was not called together before the usual period, in the autumn of the following year. The Viceroy used the interval to impress the lesson which he desired Irish politicians to lay to heart. He hoped, though he was far from sanguine, that by straightforward open measures, by the suppression of jobs, by honest administration on the principles which had been laid down by the King, he might find sufficient backing when the legislature reassembled to carry on the business of the State without reverting to the old methods. For a vigorous policy, however, he required the assistance of the Home Government, and the Home Government, as usual, wavered. 'You are to have all the support,' Lord Weymouth wrote to him in the summer of 1769, 'that your known zeal entitles you to, and your own ideas shall be adopted as to the mode of that support, if there is a moral certainty that you will be successful in procuring a majority. Your sketches of the principal characters in this country are drawn with too much coolness and impartiality, and with too genuine an air of truth, to permit us to doubt their correctness. His majesty arms you with full powers to act as you shall think desirable.'[1]

The Viceroy's 'ideas' had been to make a clean sweep of the dishonest members of the Council, and to fill their places with others of whose conscientiousness he had better expectations. To certainty of success

[1] 'Weymouth to Townshend, June 9, 1769. Most secret.'

he admitted frankly that he could not pretend. He could not confer confidentially with individual members; he could not canvass for support; he could only repeat his opinion, that if the disastrous habit of buying off opposition was fairly abandoned, and if Government was firm in showing that it would support honest men and honest measures, the Shannon and Ponsonby faction would be broken up.

Had Chatham continued at the head of affairs, the bold course might have been adopted. But Chatham was gone, and without Chatham the Cabinet, who were unwisely brave towards the American colonies, had no army to spare to encounter Irish faction. They advised half measures. The false 'servants of the Crown' were, for the present at least, to remain in their places. They were worthless and unprincipled; they were fishing in troubled waters for their own interest; but they might oppose the supplies if they were removed, and the Viceroy was directed to make one more experiment of temporizing. Very unwillingly he submitted, pleading only to be allowed to show open countenance and favour to 'the eminent gentlemen who had supported him in his last trial,' if only to show his majesty's determination that though he was pleased to suffer his servants to remain, the power of the kingdom was not to return to its late channel.

There had been, was, and ever would be, but one way of governing Ireland—by putting authority exclusively into the hands of men of personal probity and tried loyalty to the British connection. Untaught by

unvarying experience, England has persisted from the beginning in the opposite method. She has sought to rule with the support of men by whom it has been a disgrace to be supported, to sacrifice the known and obvious interests of the Irish people to the intrigues of demagogues for whom the horsewhip would have been a fitter reward. From the days of the Earls of Kildare to the days of the modern Upas Tree she has walked in the same footsteps and always to the same goal. She has encouraged the hostility which she hoped to disarm. She has taught those whom she has wished to conciliate that they may defy and insult her with impunity.

Townshend did not dispute his orders, but as the session approached he continued to repeat his opinion that bolder measures would answer better. 'I know from the surest sources,' he wrote to Weymouth in August, 'that there are many gentlemen connected with the Speaker who are waiting only to see whether the English Government will or will not resume its authority.'[1] Late in the month he went on progress in Munster, and paid Lord Shannon a visit at Castlemartyr. Ponsonby was staying there also. They were coldly polite, and evidently intended mischief.

'I assure you,' the Viceroy said, 'there is nothing popular or formidable in these persons or their party. It is the power they derive from the Crown and exercise so fully and largely over this kingdom which subjects the minds of people to them. Neither Lord Shannon

[1] 'Townshend to Weymouth, August 18.'

nor Mr. Ponsonby could preserve even their common provincial influence without their offices. The Octennial Bill gave the first blow to the dominion of aristocracy in this kingdom. It rests with Government to second the good effects of it, and to re-establish its own authority by disarming those who have turned their arms against it. Only let us be firm and resolute, and all right-minded people will come over to us.' [1]

It was not only to reduce the power of the aristocracy in Parliament that the Viceroy was anxious for vigorous action. As Lords Justices, the Speaker and his son-in-law had the supervision of the revenue, and it was calculated that by various forms of peculation as much as 150,000*l.* a year was lost to the Government out of the customs duties. Ponsonby had appointed his friends to the customs offices from highest to lowest, and though never suspected of having himself condescended to fraud, it was thought possible that he had not endangered his political influence by too inconvenient inquisitiveness. In some way or other at any rate large sums were unaccounted for. In this very summer time the Viceroy learnt that a large cargo of tobacco had been seen at a spot where it was deliberately overlooked, and that the cargo of an East Indiaman, on which the duties would have been 13,000*l.*, had been landed surreptitiously at Cork, and that no inquiry had been made. Hertford had received power from the King to remove all officers of all degrees if found unfit for their posts. These

[1] 'To Weymouth, September 13, 1769. Most secret and separate.'

powers had not been renewed to Townshend. He could not punish the incompetent or dishonest. He could not reward and encourage the good. To the members of Parliament who had been watching how the wind would blow, he could give none of the assurances which they expected, and which he had begged so earnestly to be allowed to hold out. Even Lord Drogheda and Lord Tyrone, who had supported him in the last session under promise of marquisates, had their ambition still ungratified, and were 'threatening vengeance.'[1]

Thus it was that when the time came for the new Parliament to meet, the impression prevailed that England was afraid, and that opposition would remain as before—the surest road to promotion and patronage. The Government had been defied, and had ventured a dissolution. But a dissolution had been inevitable, at all events. The insolent 'servants of the Crown' were still in office, and on them and on Irish ideas it was alone safe for those who were making politics their profession to rely. Even the Viceroy himself had been obliged to affect politeness to them. 'I declined coming to extremities,' he sadly said, 'because I have all along observed in your letters a reluctance to any measures that might be thought violent. Things remain, therefore, as they were, both as to men and measures.'[2]

The session began on the 17th of October. Ponsonby was re-elected Speaker without opposition. The speech avoided doubtful subjects, but drew atten- 1769

[1] 'Townshend to Weymouth, October 22, 1769.'
[2] 'To Weymouth, October 17.'

tion to frauds in public departments, which Ponsonby might take to himself, if he chose; 'to clandestine running of goods,' which 'had been carried to great lengths;' and to the imperfect discharge of their duties by the officers of the revenue.[1]

The patriots were eager to try their strength, or to show it, in the new House. The Government was to be informed, as speedily as possible, that they meant to be its masters, and to dictate their own terms. The question on which the Viceroy was most anxious was as before, of course, the augmentation of the army. A motion was made immediately in the committee of supply to consider whether an increase was necessary, and the Government was again defeated by 104 to 72. The first blow was followed instantly by a second. The popular leaders brought up the Pension List, and examined its composition. There, it was but too true, scandalously, shamefully, inexcusably, stood the name of the Countess of Yarmouth, niece of her grace of Kendal, for 4000*l.* a year. There stood Lord Grantham, with 2000*l.* for his own life and his son's; Lord Cholmondeley was there, whose merit was to have been Walpole's son-in-law, for 3500*l.*; Lord Bathurst had 2000*l.*; Lady Waldegrave 800*l.* 81,000*l.* in all was taken from the Irish revenues for these extraordinary

[1] Arthur Young says that in 1771 smuggling had much declined. It is one of the few instances in which this usually exact writer is mistaken. The contraband trade yielded perhaps less extravagant profits, but it was never more active, and ran in so smooth and deep a stream that little was heard of it.

personages by a virtuous Government, whilst honest national patriots were expected to shiver unrewarded; and the highest offices in the Irish service were bestowed equally on English favourites, who did not trouble themselves even to reside and do their duty. The army question came up again in another form. What use did the Crown make already of the sums voted for the defence of the kingdom? Colonel Vallancey reported that all round the coast the fortifications were in ruins. Cork, Waterford, Belfast, Limerick, wealthy and growing cities, were utterly undefended; the guns in the batteries were a hundred years old, and hardly useful as old iron.[1] This, too, was disgracefully certain; and though the repairs would have commenced on Doomsday in the afternoon, if left to the patriots, though the Irish Lords Justices were the persons really responsible for the neglect, none the less it was a telling charge; and the points of it were not lost in the handling. The committee of supply recommended, instead of an increase of the army, a local militia. The Duke of Leinster made up his quarrel with the Speaker, and threw his influence into the opposition, which was now in overwhelming strength; and Flood, Lucas, and Pery were chosen to draw up a Militia Bill. The stream of triumph still bore them on. They passed next to the field on which they had suffered their last reverses in their conflict with England—the origination of their Money Bills. Since their defeat on the appropriation of the surplus,

[1] '*Commons' Journals*, November 16, 1769.'

the Money Bill had been presented to them by the Council, and they had endured it as a perpetual affront.

1769 Their turn was come for revenge. On the 21st of November the motion for the usual supplies was rejected by a large majority, because it had not taken its rise in the House of Commons of Ireland. The Commons did not mean to refuse the grant. They proceeded immediately to draw a bill of their own. But they meant to vindicate their privilege; and lest the Viceroy should attempt to make himself independent of them by falling back on the hereditary revenue, they thwarted measures which he had proposed for a reduction of the expenditure, and they even introduced a motion the effect of which if carried into execution would have largely reduced the fixed and permanent duties.[1] This last step was of so extreme a kind, that the opposition was less unanimous. The friends of Government struggled hard to resist it, and had very nearly succeeded. But this, too, was carried by the casting vote of the Speaker, 'who, to the astonishment of everybody, though himself at the head of the revenue, divided against the Castle.'[2]

Nothing so violent had been seen in the Irish Parliament since the Viceroyalty of Lord Sydney. On that occasion the Viceroy, without even waiting for

---

[1] 'The sinking of the hereditary revenue is the great plan of some gentlemen here, and was fought strongly by the servants of the Crown in committee, and afterwards in the House.—Townshend to Weymouth, December 6, 1769.'

[2] 'Townshend to Weymouth, Dec. 6, 1769.' S. P. O.

orders from home, had replied by a prorogation. Lord Sydney's conduct had been fully approved by William's ministers. The Parliament which had defied him was not suffered to re-assemble, and there had been serious thoughts of abolishing the parliamentary constitution.

Townshend had been too feebly supported by the Cabinet to venture on such summary measures on his own responsibility. He was confronted by a combination of all the great Irish houses—the Leinsters, the Shannons, the Ponsonbies, the Beresfords, the Loftuses —who had forgotten their jealousies in the common resolution to maintain the oligarchical constitution.

The catastrophe had come which Townshend had foreseen. The noble lords, he said, 'have unmasked their real sentiments;' 'they have shown they mean to acknowledge as little as possible the superiority of the mother country.' 'Such conduct as they have observed I should despise as a private man; but when marked towards his Majesty's representative, it becomes an object of serious consideration.' 'The constant plan of these men is to possess the government of this country, and to lower the authority of English Government, which must, in the end, destroy the dependence of this country on Great Britain.'

Conciliation had borne its natural fruits. The coercive method was now to be fallen back upon at increased disadvantage. Much of the revenue had been wasted on public works or jobs. This might be saved at once. If, by good management and a more careful collection of the fixed customs and excise, the expenditure

could be brought within the hereditary revenue, the Cabinet directed Townshend to dissolve the Parliament, and terminate the childish farce by governing without one.

It appeared on examination, that if the expenses were pared down to the limits of what was barely necessary, there would remain an annual deficiency of no more than 34,000*l.* When the additional duties were no longer voted, prices would fall, consumption would increase, smuggling and private distilling would cease to be profitable, and the hereditary revenue would probably rise. Even if the establishment were carried on upon the present scale, with the Pension List included, the yearly excess need not be more than 260,000*l.* The experiment might at least be carried as far as to show the agitators that England was not at their mercy.

Townshend summoned the Council, in which Ponsonby, Shannon, and the Prime Sergeant continued to sit; and he told them that after the last vote of the House of Commons, he should so far follow the precedent of Lord Sydney as to protest, and to insist on the entry of his protest in the journals.[1]

[1] 'The wrong which Ireland conceived itself to suffer about its Money Bills was only appreciable by the Nationalist imagination. The patriots did not deny that the Privy Council had a right to originate a Money Bill. They denied only that it fell within the provisions of Poynings' Act, and that the Council had the *exclusive* right. They claimed that the House of Commons had a right of origination *also*; and they professed to mean no more than that, of two methods equally legal, they preferred their own. Their real aspiration probably was to be rid of Poynings' Act altogether; but this they could not

By skilful diplomacy, by social attentions, by the brilliant hospitality of the Castle, by the combined powers of integrity of general purpose, and flexibility of scruple, on the means by which that purpose was to be obtained, the adroit Lord-Lieutenant had in some degree overcome the opposition in the Council itself. Hely

---

venture to avow except under a veil of satire. In the height of the tumult there appeared, in the *Freeman's Journal* "The Hibernian Courtier's Creed," signed by Athanasius Secundus:—

"'Whosoever would be an Hibernian Courtier, it is necessary, before all mental endowments, that he expound rightly the law of Poynings, as explained by the 4th and 5th chapters of Philip and Mary.

"'Which law, unless he keeps pure and unmixed with any rational interpretation, he cannot enjoy place or pension, neither shall he receive concordatum in this kingdom.

"'Now, the true construction of Poynings' Act is that four different branches of the Legislature are always acknowledged in our Irish Privy Council, continually subsisting.

"'For in the enacting of every law the King hath a deliberative voice; the Lords have a deliberative; the Commons have a deliberative; and the Privy Council have a deliberative.

"'The King hath a negative voice, the Lords have a negative, the Commons have a negative, and the Council a negative.

"'And yet there are not four deliberatives nor four negatives, but one deliberative and one negative, frequently exercised against King, Lords, and Commons, by his majesty's most honourable Privy Council.

"'Further, it is essential to the preservation of his present place, and to his further hopes of preferment, that he conceive just ideas of the origination of Money Bills.

"'His interest will thus ever oblige him to confess that all benevolences are free gifts from the people; and constitutionally take their rise in an assembly neither made, nor created by, nor proceeding from the people.

"'This is the Hibernian Courtier's political faith, to which whosoever inviolably adheres shall be rewarded with a masked pension for himself, and a fancy ball, without masks, for his wives and daughters.

"'And for all those who reject the foregoing liberal explanation, there shall be protests, prorogations, partial sheriffs, packed juries, and influenced electors to their lives' end.'"—*Barataariana*, p. 99.

Hutchinson had been bought at a lower price than he had set upon his services, for his wife had still to wait for her peerage. Tisdall, the Attorney-General, had been gained over. Anthony Malone had taken the Viceroy's side from the first. These gentlemen were now prepared to a certain extent to support Government. They expressed proper regret at the behaviour of the House of Commons. As the protest would be received with ill humour, they advised as a further step an immediate prorogation. One thing, however, they would not do; they refused unanimously to assist in reducing the expenditure to the level of the hereditary revenue. 'They were all unwilling,' the Viceroy wrote, 'that the hereditary revenue should be thought sufficient, and therefore said everything that could prevent that experiment from being tried.' [1]

That an attempt might be made to govern without a Parliament the House of Commons had already anticipated. That it was deliberately in contemplation, being acknowledged in Council, was of course whispered about. Public feeling caught alarm. Dublin fell into a fever fit of patriotic enthusiasm; the House of Commons was the idol of the hour, the defender of Ireland's liberties; the emotions may be conceived, therefore, with which at this crisis a paragraph was received which had just appeared in the *London Daily Advertiser*, telling the patriots how they were regarded in that malignant country which was the cause of all their woes.

[1] 'Townshend to Weymouth, December 11, 1769.'

On the 18th of December a motion was made in the House of Commons that a paragraph be read from Mr. Woodfall's Paper of the 9th, relating to the votes on the Money Bill. The Paper was produced. The clerk rose and read— 1769

'Hibernian patriotism is a transcript of that filthy idol which is worshipped at the London Tavern. Insolence assumed from an opinion of impunity usurps the place which boldness against real injuries ought to hold. The refusal of the late Bill of Supply because it was not brought in contrary to the practice of ages, in violation of the constitution and to the certain ruin of the dependence of Ireland on Great Britain, is a kind of behaviour more suiting to an army of Whiteboys than the grave representatives of a nation. This is the most daring insult that has been hitherto offered to Government. It must be counteracted with firmness, or else the State is ruined. Let the refractory House be dissolved. If the same spirit of seditious obstinacy should continue, I know no remedy but one. The Parliament of Great Britain is supreme over its conquests as well as its colonies, and the service of the nation must not be left undone on account of the factious obstinacy of a Provincial Assembly. Let our Legislature, for they have the undoubted right, vote the Irish supplies, and save a nation that their own obstinate representatives endeavour to ruin.'

It was come to this then. Not only were they to be governed without a Parliament, by the hereditary revenue, but taxes were to be imposed on them at the

will and pleasure of the Legislature of Great Britain. Already from across the Atlantic were coming sounds of the approaching battle for colonial freedom. The wrongs of which America had to complain were but mosquito bites by the side of the enormous injuries which had been inflicted by English selfishness on the trade and manufactures of Ireland. Why was Ireland to submit when America was winning admiration by resistance? Why, indeed? save that America was in earnest. The Irish were not. America meant to fight. The Irish meant only to clamour and to threaten to fight. The American leaders, rightly or wrongly, were working for the benefit of the whole population of the colonies. The Irish leaders were using the wrongs of their country as a means of forcing England to bribe them into connivance. Had the Irish at any period of their history aspired to any noble freedom, they would have fought for it as the Scotch fought at far greater disadvantage. They expected to obtain the privileges which are the only prize of the brave and noble, by eloquence and chicanery. They desired those privileges only to convert them into personal profit; and when the hard truth was spoken to them, they screamed like hysterical girls.

A resolution was carried instantly without a dissentient voice, that the paragraph which they had heard 'was a daring invasion of the rights of Parliament,' and 'was calculated to create groundless jealousy between the subjects of the two kingdoms.' The offending paper was burnt on College Green before the doors of

the House by the hangman, the sheriff and javelin-men attending in state at the execution. Flood and Pery moved that the Viceroy be questioned on his intentions. The House agreed, and their temper was not mended by Townshend's answer. 'He did not think himself authorized, he said, to disclose his majesty's instructions till he had received his majesty's commands for so doing.'[1]

A middle course was now impossible; at all risks the servants of the Crown, who were the real instigators of the action of the House, must be taught that they had passed the limits of forbearance. On the 23rd the Viceroy wrote for permission to remove Lord Shannon, the Speaker, and five other lords and gentlemen from the Privy Council, and from the offices which they held under the Crown.[2] A 'most secret' letter of the same date reiterates his reasons for requesting it.

'Mr. Ponsonby must be displaced from the head of the Revenue Board. I need not dwell upon his conduct while the marks are so recent and decisive. The authority of the Crown in this country can never be maintained while this gentleman holds his present powers. If we dissolve Parliament he will canvass for the chair of the next, with the whole power and authority of his office, and we must see to prevent him. Lord Lanesborough's friends have gone against us, and he was under the greatest obligations to the Crown. Mr.

[1] *Commons' Journals*, December 21, 1769.

[2] The Earls of Louth and Lanesborough, Sir William Mayne, Sir Hercules Langford Rowley, and Sir William Fownes.

Champneys was placed on the establishment for 1000*l.* a year, to open a seat for his lordship at the Revenue Board. To make the revenue produce what it ought, one or two members of the board must be Englishmen, always resident, regularly bred in the revenue of England, men of sense, spirit, and honour, who could be depended on to do their duty themselves and prevent others from abusing theirs. Lord Shannon must be removed from the Ordnance, and the inferior board must be changed also. The principal share of the power and influence of those parties which have so long embarrassed Government was owing to the favour as well as forbearance of the Crown under which they have been cherished; while by a constant private understanding with its declared opponents, they have distressed one Lord-Lieutenant, compromised with another, always gaining something for themselves, and paring away the authority and reputation of the English Government until it has scarce ground left to stand upon. Members of the House of Commons have been watching to see where the power would finally reside. I earnestly recommend these changes, and such a regulation of the revenue as shall tend to its improvement and the support of the Government. Lose no time. The same cabals, the same demands, intrigues, and pretended patriotism will revive. Government must begin from this moment to extricate itself from this dilemma or must submit.'[1]

[1] 'Townshend to Weymouth, December 23.' Abridged.

The Parliament was allowed one more opportunity of repentance. Half alarmed at their own audacity, the factious members had consented after all to the augmentation of the army. Part of the supplies had been voted under forms not included in the bill which they had thrown out. The necessary business was wound up at Christmas, and the royal assent was given to the Acts which had already been passed. The Viceroy, on the 26th, addressed the two Houses. He told them with painful plainness the light in which he regarded them and their doings; and then, as Lord Sydney had done, and as he had given notice that he himself intended to do, he submitted a distinct protest against the claims which they had advanced, and required them to enter it on the Journals. The Peers consented, five only objecting and recording the grounds of their disagreement.[1] The Commons, too proud to yield further, and aware, like the Viceroy, that it was a crisis in the constitution, when to give way was to allow themselves defeated, positively refused. Townshend, on his side, was firm. Had they complied, they would have separated for the fortnight's recess and have re-assembled in January. They were prorogued nominally till the 20th of March, but in fact, as they all knew, for an indefinite time.

[1] Louth, Charlemont, Powerscourt, Longford, and Mountmorris.

SECTION III.

Two courses were now open to the Cabinet, and two only. The behaviour of the House of Commons, notoriously consequent as it was on the rejection of the first overtures of Lord Shannon and Mr. Ponsonby to the Viceroy, must have satisfied the most obstinate believer in Parliamentary Government that Ireland in the existing circumstances was not fit for it. Free constitutions presuppose in the leading citizens of a country at least some degree of probity and patriotism. When the ambition of individuals never reaches beyond personal interest, when their consciences recognize no obligation beyond duty to themselves and their friends, the forms of liberty are travestied, and the sooner the truth is recognized and acted on the better for all parties concerned. Townshend had been sent to Ireland to put an end to jobbery, to clear away the scandals of generations, and to begin a new era. He had been foiled by the inveterate dishonesty of the principal Irish politicians, nor was there the slightest hope of finding in the Irish representatives the materials of an honourable party on whose support he could rely. The facts of the case being undeniably thus, the Viceroy might have been left to select a council from the many honest and loyal men who had held aloof hitherto from the unwholesome atmosphere of Parliament; and with their help, and with economic management of the

1770

hereditary revenue, he might have enforced order, punished fraud and swindling, and opened the way by a just administration towards a future union with Great Britain. The honest course would in the end have proved the safest. It would have involved sacrifices, however, on the part of England. If integrity and justice were to be the rule of Government, precept would have to be attended by example. The Cabinet could not any longer abuse Irish patronage to purchase Parliamentary support at home, or quarter favourites on the Irish establishment whom elsewhere they dared not recommend. The English statesmen of the eighteenth century, the Graftons, the Weymouths, the Norths, the Shelburnes, had learnt in official routine to regard these resources as indispensable for the public service. They were incapable, perhaps, from habit and training, of breaking in upon established precedent. There was another way of governing Ireland: it was also possible to fall in with the national ideas, to maintain the Parliament as a form, but to manage it through and by the corruptions which it loved; to dissolve the old parties, and to form instead a new combination which should be held together by dependence upon the Castle.

Of the alternative policies this unhappily was the one on which the Cabinet resolved, and Townshend remained in Ireland to become the most unwilling instrument in carrying it out. He set himself to the work of seduction with all the arts which he possessed.

The Dublin tradesmen had suffered by the premature dispersion of the Lords and Commons. The Viceroy restored them to good humour by the magnificence of the Castle hospitalities. He gave masquerades; he gave fancy balls, in which the costumes, with a skilful compliment to Ireland, were made only of Irish manufacture. The members of the Opposition sneered, and would have staid away; the wives and daughters refused to exclude themselves from assemblies of which the capital of Ireland had never seen the equal, and forced their husbands and fathers into submission. The gentlemen could not resist the fascination of the Castle dinner parties where the wit was as sparkling as the champagne. Townshend laughed at everything—laughed at the Opposition, laughed at the friends of Government, laughed most of all at himself. With his light good humour he conquered popularity, while more subtly he secured important friends by working substantially upon them below the surface. Hely Hutchinson was attached by a pension [1] which was added to his salary as Prime-Sergeant. Pery was disarmed by similar methods, and the links of the chain were strengthened which held Tisdall. Thus by the time March came, the Viceroy felt himself strong enough to begin the

[1] Townshend insisted very strongly on the necessity of this pension. 'Nothing,' he said, 'but the unrivalled application and abilities of this gentleman, who is so necessary for the King's service, and to be detached from the great interests in opposition to Government, could prevail on me to recommend this affair so strongly, by which I think the most useful man in this Parliament will be fully secured.' —'To Weymouth, March 7, 1770. Secret.'

serious part of his business. To gentle seduction, terrors were to be added. The Cabinet had given him the permission which he desired, to deprive the Shannon party of their offices; he had watched his opportunity to deliver the blow, and now it fell. They had believed that finding themselves in difficulties with America, the Cabinet would not venture to punish them. On the 6th of March, Shannon, Lanesborough, and Ponsonby were undeceived by learning from the Viceroy 1770 that the King had no longer occasion for their services. With the chiefs of the Ordnance Board and the Revenue Board all the subordinates and dependents were to follow. The entire departments were to be changed completely to the very last man. The effect was ludicrous. Lord Loftus, another, though less inveterate delinquent, and himself the possessor of a lucrative office, waited in consternation on Townshend, and endeavoured to make his peace. Townshend put him on his good behaviour. If he tripped again into opposition, he was informed that he and all who belonged to him would have to make way for trustier men. All offices at the disposition of the Crown from highest to lowest were to be held thenceforward by persons who would place their votes at the disposition of the Viceroy, and by no others.

The revenue commission had been the scene of the grossest frauds; not only was the whole staff to be replaced, but the number of commissioners was to be increased: Townshend had significantly said that he must have Englishmen among them, men of integrity,

ability, and experience unconnected with Ireland.[1] The patriots looked for an outbreak of indignation at the dismissal of their champions. They were astonished to find that Dublin cared nothing after all for the oligarchy with whom they had identified themselves. The Opposition majority disintegrated so rapidly, that the Viceroy almost contemplated the recall of the Parliament. 'No servants of the Crown,' he said, 'had ever fallen less regretted.' But he preferred to prolong the suspense to make sure of his ground. 'The consequences of the late measures had not had time to operate fully.' Loftus had promised to behave well. Others would follow if not pressed too hastily. Prorogation, therefore, followed prorogation. The submission of the same Parliament which had been so audaciously defiant would be a greater triumph than the election of another by a dissolution. The noble lords and their friends seeing the game go against them lost their tempers. Flood's eloquence continued to stream through the press, but it fell flat upon Dublin society, which was basking in the sunshine of the Castle; and his invectives read by the light of Townshend's correspondence are absurd to childishness. Sir William Mayne, a favourite of the Duke of Leinster, was among those who had been removed from the Council. He had been one of the

[1] The addition to the number of revenue commissioners in Ireland by Townshend, striking as it did at the root of an established and lucrative form of peculation, was the subject for many years of the most passionate declamation in the Irish Parliament. . . By allowing the new commissioners to sit in the House of Commons, he laid himself open to the charge of adding to the number of placemen. . . But his private letters leave no doubt of the real motive for the increase.

most violent of the Opposition members, entirely in consequence of what he had regarded as a personal affront. On Townshend's arrival in Ireland 'Mayne honoured him with his wishes to be chief secretary,' his qualifications being 'that he was one of the most florid, perpetual, and inept orators that ever performed on the Irish or any other stage.'[1] He had not the success which he expected. He then offered to vacate his seat, giving the Viceroy the nomination, if the Viceroy would recommend him for a peerage. 'I own to your lordship,' the Viceroy said in a letter to Weymouth, 'the proposition rather shocked me; it was a long while before I could bring myself to answer it with temper.' Mayne could not have his peerage. He had revenged himself in the usual way, and had now been punished. The Duke of Leinster took his parasite's disgrace as personal to himself. He wrote to Townshend, begging that when the Viceroy erased the name of Sir William Mayne he would erase his own at the same time. Townshend answered courteously that the Viceroy had no authority, as the Duke must be aware, to remove a Privy Councillor by an act of his own. If the Duke was serious, he would, with great concern, 'transmit his application.' In a brief note, characteristic alike of the man, and of the elements in which the young Fitzgeralds were being educated, the Duke repeated his demand 'You are so obliging as to say,' he wrote, 'that if I continue to desire it, you will transmit my letter to be laid before his majesty.

[1] 'Townshend to Weymouth, April 28.'

It is the only favour I ever asked of your excellency, and I flatter myself that your excellency will take such steps as are proper to have my request complied with, as it will save me the necessity of doing it myself.'[1]

The Duke, perhaps, expected Townshend to challenge him. He was disappointed. His letter was forwarded to St. James's. Sir George Macartney was instructed to communicate that the request had been complied with; and the Duke closed the singular correspondence by thanking Macartney for the trouble which he had taken, 'particularly as it had prevented him taking an unprecedented step, and perhaps attended with some consequences, which, however, he would have risked, for the ease and satisfaction which he now felt in his mind of being no longer of a board which he once thought most honourable.'

Swimming in a base and sordid element, Townshend, like Cornwallis after him, detested the work in which he was engaged of superseding a corrupt oligarchy by corrupt Prætorians. If England could be persuaded to treat Ireland with real justice, better things might still be possible.

'The general disposition of his majesty's subjects,' he wrote to Lord Weymouth, 'has been tried and found faithful at this crisis. Unagitated by the disappointment of the leading interests, unprejudiced by the insinuations or example of other parts of his majesty's dominions, who solicit them to make a common cause

[1] 'The Duke of Leinster to Lord Townshend, April 23, 1770.' S.P.O.

to distress the Government, they apparently remain at their homes, a distinguished example of loyalty and confidence. Therefore, my lord, I the more readily solicit such indulgences as may appear on better deliberation fitting to be granted to them. I am informed that there is a species of coarse, narrow woollen cloth manufactured in this country, proper for the Spanish and Portuguese markets, and that none of the same quality is manufactured in Great Britain. I submit whether the free exportation of that article might not be given to Ireland, as it would, in some measure, counteract a large bounty given by the French for the importation of wool from the western parts of this kingdom.

'It seems also but fair to this country, which has been so encouraged to cultivate the linen manufacture, to extend to them the bounty granted last session of Parliament on the exportation of checks, and to take off the heavy duty of 30 per cent. which they now pay on importation, equal to a prohibition; and if a bounty on the exportation of printed linens be granted as a further encouragement to British linen, I should hope it may be thought proper that the same should be extended to Ireland.

'Follow my advice, and then the sooner Parliament meets the better, lest the country, hitherto affectionate, and contemning the private views of our opponents, when it finds itself punished for its indiscretion, through disappointment should join those whom it at present rejects.' [1]

[1] 'To Weymouth, September 25, 1770. Most private and secret.'

The favour so modestly requested was but a small instalment of the debt of justice which England really owed. Had it been freely conceded at this time, what mischief might not have been prevented! Political sagacity may be baffled. Political concessions may aggravate the evils they are meant to cure. Justice only never fails. A few years were to pass, and the entire fabric of commercial disabilities was to be swept away from its foundations. But the fall of it was to bring no gratitude, while the memory of the wrong was to remain for ever uneffaced and uneffaceable. The chain was allowed to remain till it was broken by the revolt of the American colonies, and Ireland was to learn the deadly lesson that her real wrongs would receive attention from England only when England was compelled to remember them by fear. North, Weymouth, Shelburne—any one of whom left to his own intelligence would have seen the fitness of instant consent — were deaf to advice. The manufacturing interests in the English Parliament were too powerful. Townshend's advice could not be followed. The bounties of which he spoke were violations even of the miserable compacts to which Ireland's woollen trade had been sacrificed. Ireland was denied the benefit of them; the Viceroy was driven back on the only remedy which remained—of wholesale and systematic bribery; while the essential interests of the island were contemptuously neglected or forgotten.[1]

[1] The rise in the price of farm produce had not remedied the poverty of the people, for the landowners and middlemen, when they

The seizure of the Falkland Isles by Spain in the summer of 1770, created a sudden danger of war. Weymouth ordered Townshend to be on his guard. Townshend had to reply that the country was still defenceless, and that if war came, he could not answer for the consequences. The Catholics infinitely exceeded the Protestants in numbers. They were miserable, mutinous, and devoted to their priests. Internal peace depended on 'the submission of the wealthy Roman Catholics to the Government.' As to foreign enemies, 'neither Waterford, Dungannon, nor Youghal could resist a frigate.' 'Cork, the finest harbour in the world, more important to Great Britain than Dublin, was defended only by a miserable battery, called Cove Fort.'[1] 'Common sense and common justice' had been so long forgotten in Ireland, 'that the powers of party obliged the Government to misapply the purses of the people to private purposes.' 'An absurd terror had been inculcated, that every useful military work, wherever

were not held in check by the Whiteboys, had secured the profit to themselves. Townshend was no more of a sentimentalist than English statesmen are apt to be, yet he summed up one of his descriptive letters by saying:—'In short, my lord, the distress of this people is very great. I hope to be excused for representing to his majesty the miserable situation of the lower ranks of his subjects in this kingdom. What from the rapaciousness of their unfeeling landlords and the restrictions on their trade, they are among the most wretched people on earth.'—'To Weymouth, November 23.'

[1] Townshend himself examined Cork. 'It must,' he says, 'be a matter of curious speculation to whoever traces the old works about the harbour, to observe how much abler were the engineers in the years 1602 and 1644, when Lord Mountjoy and Prince Rupert commanded in this country. Dugnose and Ramhead were better positions than the job at the Cove.'—'To Weymouth, October 16.'

placed, was intended more against the liberties of the people than against the views of a restless enemy, in constant correspondence with the restless and bigoted inhabitants of their own religion.'[1] Every Government work was jobbed 'to gratify individuals whose political power was irresistible.' Barracks were placed where soldiers would be of least service. Outlying posts had been destroyed which had held the peasantry in check, and the regiments removed to towns where the officers learnt or practised Irish vices, and the men forgot their discipline in whisky shops.

Of the condition of the army there had been recently a very painful illustration. Major Wrixon, who was with a battalion at Limerick, had carried off a young lady from her parents' house by force, and had kept her with him in the barracks. He was tried by court-martial, and cashiered. The court, however, memorialized the Crown in his favour, on the ground

---

[1] Townshend confirms the evidence which came out on the late Whiteboy trials as to the temper of the Catholics of the South:—

'The remains of the old Popish clans keep up a constant correspondence with France and Spain, for smuggling, for recruits, and for our deserters. They are a very lawless people, mostly armed, frequently forming themselves into banditti, defying law and magistrates, and committing the greatest outrages. The troops are called for to secure common execution of criminals. French vessels frequent the coasts, and the great supply of foreign goods into the south of the kingdom is by means of these people. It is amazing that all the posts of troops which King William established in the country to civilize the people should have been removed to the corporations in the interior, and those parts left in as uncivilized and dangerous a state as at that period. When the mountains are occupied the revenue will be increased forty or fifty thousand a year.'—To Weymouth, October 16, 1770.

that Major Wrixon's dismissal from the service would distress his sister!

At Rathdowney, in Queen's County, there had been a scene no less characteristic. The Viceroy had reported that 'there was a wild ungovernable disposition in the people of many parts of the kingdom, which neither the common law nor the civil magistrates were able to restrain.' The military had to be called in at Rathdowney, but the military power was as little to be trusted as the civil power was inadequate. A sergeant's guard went into the town on market-day, apparently to buy provisions. Other privates of the regiment at the station followed them, and, with no discoverable provocation, 'fell promiscuously on the inhabitants, wounding some and killing others.' Not an officer was to be found in the place but the quartermaster. It was proved to be the practice of the officers everywhere to 'appear in quarters for a day, sign the returns, and then absent themselves till the next return.'

Townshend hurried to the spot, and ordered the troops to be paraded without arms. Those of the rioters who could be identified were handed over to the civil authorities. The rest were marched to Dublin, and tried by a general court-martial. The officers were charged with being absent from duty without leave. They were found guilty, and dismissed the service; but, like Major Wrixon, were recommended to mercy. With such troops, such officers, and such court-martials, the Viceroy did not find his task more easy of defending the augmentation of the army. He refused to listen to

the memorial. In both instances the sentences were carried out. But here, too, the evil could be traced to the common source of all the disorders in the country. 'The necessity of yielding to powerful parliamentary interests had been the great source of the indiscipline of the army.'

SECTION IV.

THE public departments had been re-organized. The dependents of the Boyles and the Ponsonbies had vanished with their chiefs. The Customs and Excise boards had been re-filled by new members, who could be relied on to refuse to countenance dishonesty, and whose votes could be depended on in a parliamentary division. The great Loftus interest had been brought into obedience, and the support of the independent members, who had held aloof in the last session, had been secured by the only means which were capable of attaching them. It was said afterwards by Lord Clare, that half a million in all was the price which they had placed upon their services. At length, in the spring of 1771, the Viceroy found himself once more prepared to meet the Parliament, without fear of the renewal of the scenes of the late session. The lowest calculation of the numbers at the disposition of Government promised a majority of at least twenty in the same House and among the same men who, eighteen months before, were half prepared to declare the independence of Ireland. Lord Townshend's instructions were not to re-open old sores, or to require a recall of the hostile resolution. His protest had sufficed. He was now to conciliate, to hold out hopes that the King would 'co-operate' in relieving Irish distress; and to show 'that it would be owing solely

1771

to the rashness and folly of the Opposition if they and their fellow-subjects were deprived of those advantages.'[1]

Once more, on the 24th of February, the Viceroy encountered the lords and gentlemen who had sworn to drive him from Ireland. Without referring to past differences, he told them that he had the truest satisfaction in obeying his majesty's commands to meet them again. Knowing something, perhaps, of what had happened in the interval, but ignorant how far the methods employed had been successful, the Opposition declared war upon the instant, and an address was moved by the younger Ponsonby, in which the usual compliments to the Lord-Lieutenant were pointedly omitted. An amendment was proposed to replace the customary words.[2] A debate followed, which lasted till midnight, and the fatal truth was then revealed in the division, that the power of the Ponsonbies had passed from them. They were defeated by 132 to 107. Their own arms had been turned against them. By the control of the public purse they had hitherto secured a monopoly of power. Place, pension, promotion, all pleasant things which Irish politicians entered Parliament to gain, were thenceforward to be the reward of the faithful servants of the Castle, and of no others. Though recovered by the most questionable means, the authority of the Crown was restored to its visible representative.

The defeated families had been adroit enough to

---

[1] 'Lord Rochford to Townshend, February 9, 1771.'

[2] 'To return our most humble thanks to his majesty for continuing his excellency Lord Townshend in the government of this kingdom.

represent their cause as the cause of Ireland. In return for the support of the patriots against the Viceroy they had themselves adopted the patriot cries; and when it was plain that Parliament had deserted them, they were taken up as martyrs by the people. A furious mob assembled the next day at College Green. Loftus was pelted and insulted; suspected members of the Lower House were caught, and oaths of fidelity to Ireland were thrust into their mouths. The troops were called out to disperse the rioters, and remained on guard at the gates when the business of the morning commenced. Flood started to his feet with a complaint that freedom was in danger from the presence of an armed force. He moved a resolution that the House was being over-awed. Out of a hundred and fifty members, fifty-one only supported him. Still unable to realize what had happened, he returned to the subject on which before he had achieved so splendid a triumph. He moved that it was necessary to declare the undoubted privilege of the Commons to originate the Money Bills. Here, too, his strength had vanished. He forced a division, and Townshend's new allies were true to their engagements. Flood's motion was lost by 128 to 105.

But humiliation so direct was naturally painful. The Viceroy had desired to spare his new supporters, and was willing to allow them to soothe their self-respect by a show of consistency. Sexton Pery moved, as a paragraph in the address, that 'while the Commons were incapable of attempting anything against the

rights of the Crown, they were tenacious of the honour of being the first movers in granting supplies; and they besought his majesty not to construe their zeal into an invasion of his authority.' To Townshend, Pery represented his motion as an apology and admission of fault. Townshend saw that it was an indirect assertion of the disputed right. He did not himself quarrel with the words; but the King, at his advice, made a marked allusion to them in his reply; and the Commons, by inserting the reply in the Journals, without comment or objection, accepted and submitted to the implied reproof.[1]

The address to the Crown being agreed upon, there followed next the address to the Lord-Lieutenant, the double ceremony being invariably observed. The Opposition saw that it would be hopeless to resist. The address to Townshend was passed, and the duty of presenting it fell to Ponsonby as Speaker. It was too much for him. Driven off the field, utterly and finally defeated, he could not be the person to place the laurel-wreath on the brows of his conqueror. 'He had desired,' he said, in conveying to the House his resignation of the chair, 'to preserve and transmit to his successor the rights and privileges of the Commons of Ireland. In the last session it had pleased the Lord-Lieutenant to accuse the Commons of a great crime.

[1] 'His majesty is well pleased with the assurance given by the House of Commons of their regard for his rights, and those of the Crown of Great Britain, which it is his indispensable duty to assert, and which he will ever think it incumbent on him to maintain.'

In the present session it had pleased the Commons to take the first opportunity of testifying their approbation of his excellency by voting him an address of thanks. Respect for their privileges prevented him from being the instrument of delivering such address, and he must request them to elect another Speaker.'[1]

He, perhaps, hoped his resignation would not be accepted. The Government, in fact, narrowly escaped defeat upon it. Sir George Macartney proposed Sexton Pery. The elder Fitzgibbon seconded him. Pery's election in a full House was carried only by a majority of four.[2] Ponsonby had a vote of thanks for his past services, and the House, its interests being no longer absorbed in quarrelling with the Viceroy, addressed itself to practical business. Heads of bills were drawn for the encouragement of agriculture, for the repression of trade combinations, for the determination of wages and hours of work. Drunkenness was increasing annually. A bill was devised to prevent corn from being wasted on whisky-making; while Townshend, eager on his side to encourage the Irish in any useful exertion,

[1] *Commons' Journals*, March 4, 1771.

[2] Lord Tyrone wanted his brother, Mr. John Beresford, to be chosen. Beresford had been already nominated chief of the new commissioners of the Revenue. 'The envy,' said the Viceroy, 'which would have followed a young man so likely soon to be at the head of the Revenue, holding the chair at the same time, the effect it would have had on the first families and friends to Government, and the revival of an idea that English Government would again fall into the hands of contractors, was so strong that I was obliged to urge Lord Tyrone to withdraw his brother. He did so in the handsomest manner, and supported Mr. Pery.'—Townshend to Rochford, March 11.

again pressed on the Home Government the unfairness of giving bounties to the Manchester manufacturers, in the teeth of the linen compact, and pleaded either that the bounty should be withdrawn, or Ireland be allowed to share it.[1]

It might have been expected by the least sanguine of Ireland's real friends, that when the Parliament had at last settled to real work, England would have given it some encouragement. England had made herself responsible for Ireland by forcibly annexing it to the empire. She had completely, if scandalously, recovered her constitutional authority. We find, with a feeling approaching indignation, that she at once dismissed the wretched country out of her mind, and relapsed into selfish indifference. Not only was Townshend's caution on the linen compact again neglected, the bounties maintained in favour of Manchester and refused to Belfast, but even the heads of the Agricultural Bill were rejected, because it would add to the expenditure. The Whisky Bill was rejected, because the Treasury could not spare a few thousand pounds which were levied upon drunkenness.[2] The alteration in the Judges' Tenure, which Townshend had promised, had been lost through faction and misunderstanding. The House expected that these matters would now

[1] 'To Rochford, March 24.'

[2] The Viceroy was not to blame. In transmitting the heads of the proposed Act, he said the whisky shops were ruining the peasantry and the workmen. There was an earnest and general desire to limit them. 'It will be a loss to the revenue,' he admitted, 'but it is a very popular bill, and will give general content and satisfaction throughout the kingdom.

receive attention, but they expected in vain. A prudent Government would have remembered that corruption is as dishonourable to those who employ it as to those who yield to it; would have endeavoured to atone for its own share in that bad transaction, and to reconcile the purchased majority to their shame, by at least assisting them to confer solid benefits on their country. The session did not end without a significant expression of regret for the lost opportunity. Thanks were proposed to the Viceroy for his just and prudent administration. A sarcastic substitute, proposed by a hot member of the Opposition, fell unseconded.[1] An amendment to expunge the words 'just and prudent' found fifty supporters.

---

[1] 'Proposed to give the Viceroy our special thanks for having obtained for this country a law securing judges in their offices and appointments during good behaviour, in pursuance of his excellency's promise; for the returning of the law for the restraining of the distilleries; for the expected alteration of other laws; for the rise in the value of lands.'—*Commons' Journals*, May 16, 1771.

SECTION V.

Corruption unredeemed by integrity of purpose becomes an expensive process. The more complete the shame, the higher the price that must be paid for it. The Dublin press was free, and Loftus, Tyrone, Tisdall, Hutchinson, and the other apostates from the patriot band, were held up weekly in the *Freeman's Journal* to public scorn. Back stairs Castle scandals, as false, most of them, as the general conception which the patriots had formed of Lord Townshend, were the daily amusement of the coffee-houses. Had the recovered influence of Government shown itself in active measures for the relief of the people, the ignorance would have been less bitter. When nothing of this kind appeared, the Viceroy found himself beset with demands which he dared not refuse, lest he should imperil all that he had gained. Viscounts who had sons and nephews in the Lower House wanted earldoms. Barons wanted to be viscounts, Commons to be barons. Patrons of boroughs required promotions in the army for their friends; sinecures and offices in remainder for themselves and their families. The really important reform which had been carried out in the Ordnance and Revenue departments added to the difficulties. The Viceroy had made a deadly enemy of every man who had filled his pockets under the old system. The increase expected from the change in the hereditary

1771

revenue had offended the old politicians, who desired to keep the Government dependent.[1] Mr. Beresford, who was to succeed Ponsonby as head commissioner, was dissatisfied to find that he was not to succeed to Ponsonby's patronage. Sir William Osborne was displeased at being passed over in Beresford's favour. The Earl of Tyrone asked for a marquis's coronet, and could not have it. The promotion of his second brother was an inadequate compensation. Another brother, William Beresford, had married old Fitzgibbon's daughter. Tyrone applied for a bishopric for him. He was but twenty-eight years old, and the request being refused, Fitzgibbon conceived himself affronted as well. The price of dishonour was raised so high that the income and patronage of England would not have satisfied all the claimants; and as England would give nothing except rewards for political service, the Viceroy was in a bad position.

Money was wanted. No supplies had been asked for in the spring, and Parliament re-assembled on the 8th of October. The patriots were in spirits again. The address was fought through once more, paragraph by paragraph. Lord Kildare moved that 'we lament that we cannot enumerate among our blessings the continuance of Lord Townshend in the government of this kingdom.' Flood stoutly seconded him, and at 1771

[1] 'It is perceived that thereby an end would be put to those annual bargains which Government at present is under the sad necessity of making with ungrateful servants or prostitute opponents.'—Townshend to the Earl of Rochford, December 11, 1771. Secret.

each division the Government majority diminished. The traffic with Ireland's conscience had been costly. The Money Bill of 1769 had been rejected, and the expenditure had not been reduced. On the 12th of November, Flood called scornful attention to the deficit, and was in a minority of not more than twenty. Following up his campaign, he attacked the alteration in the Revenue Board, on the ground of increase of English influence in the House of Commons; and on the 16th he carried his resolution by a majority of forty-six. He proposed to send it to the Viceroy by the Speaker's hand, and was successful again. At the back of this came a job of Lord North's.

Lord North, for reasons of his own, had ordered Townshend to place a certain Jerry Dyson and his three sons on the Irish Establishment for a pension of a thousand a year. In vain Townshend had protested. The minister persisted, and the result was a vote of censure. 'In spite of all that I could do,' wrote the poor Viceroy, 'those who were under very high obligations to Government voted against us, and others went out.'

This time the supplies were not opposed, but to his disgust rather than surprise, the Viceroy found 'that there was once more a general design to distress and disgrace the English Government.' [1] In another year, unless the disorderly spirit could be controlled, the Money Bills would be again in danger. Sadly and wearily he detailed the history of his misfortunes. Tisdall and Hely Hutchinson had been languid. Malone

[1] 'Townshend to Rochford, December 5, 1771. Most secret.'

had spoken for the Opposition, and divided with them. The new-made Privy Councillors, from whom so much help had been looked for, had been found wanting at the hour of trial. The Beresford faction generally had been vehement and violent; and of the rank and file of members who had either broken their engagements or had presented requests which had not been granted, and were revenging their disappointment, a black list was forwarded to London.[1]

[1] The list, with the attached remarks, is curiously instructive on the working Irish Parliamentary Government:—

'Members considered as friends who have voted against Government.

'Lord Dunluce. — His father (the Earl of Antrim) asks a marquisate. His lordship solicits a place for his tutor.

'Hugh Skeffington.—Obtained through me a pension of 200*l.* for his brother's widow.

'Wm. Skeffington.—Obtained a cornetcy and a company in two years.

'Geo. Montgomery.—I gave a friend of his, on his request, an employment of 80*l.* a year.

'Robert Birch.—Solicits a resignation of ten livings from the Crown.

'John Creighton.—Has an appointment of 250*l.* a year. I solicited and obtained a peerage for his father, who promised every support, but is always, as well as his other sons, against Government.

'Robert Scott.—I made him a commissioner of the Linen Board, and he has since asked for a place.

'Sir Arthur Brooke.—I procured him the Privy Council, and likewise, very lately, a majority of dragoons, without purchase, for his brother.

'Ric. Gorges. — Is connected with Lord Tyrone. He has asked for a place.

'Edward Carey. — Brother-in-law to Lord Tyrone. I procured him the Privy Council, and several things have been done to oblige him.

'James Fortescue.—Lord Clermont's brother. I procured him the Privy Council. He wants a peerage in remainder.

'Colonel Cunningham.—I recommended him for the first regiment that falls during my administration.

'Mr. Westenra.—Was brought in by Lord Clermont, and promised always to support Government. He asks for a place.

'Colonel Pomeroy. — Obtained

So dark a second time appeared the prospects of the Government, that Ponsonby came again to the front. The new Revenue Board was naturally the object of his attack. He felt so confident of success, that he bet 500 to 3 that he would destroy it. He swore 'that he would never quit the office of door-keeper in the House of Commons till he had driven Lord Townshend out of the country.[1] Lord Townshend required no driving; he would have been heartily glad to be gone; for the Cabinet left nothing undone which could aggravate his difficulties. Of 'justice to Ireland' he could obtain nothing, and for his real reform only a lukewarm support.[2] Of wrong, and wrong inflicted in the most insulting form, there was as much as Ireland's worst enemy could desire. Notwithstanding their ill-humour, the Parliament had

---

leave of absence from America to attend Parliament. He asks for a regiment.

'Henry Pritty. — Asked and obtained a promise of Church preferment a few days before the division.

'Th. Coghlan. — I made him commissioner of the Linen Board. He asks for a place.

'Hugh Massey. — Solicits a peerage for himself, and an advance in the Revenue for his eldest son.

'Ch. Smith. — I made his brother a judge.

'Thos. Conolly. — A deanery was given to this gentleman's friend, a seat at the Revenue Board to his brother-in-law, and several other things in the army and revenue.

'Colonel W. Bruton.—Wants to purchase the office of Quartermaster-General, and to sell his lieutenant-colonel's commission at an advanced price.

'Anthony Malone.—Has been obliged in everything that he has asked.

'Mr. Malone.—Nephew to Anthony Malone,' &c., &c.

[1] 'Townshend to Rochford, December 12.'

[2] 'The Cabinet had begun to doubt "whether, in the face of the opposition, it was prudent to carry out the new Revenue Board."'—Rochford to Townshend, December 20.

voted the supplies. They had introduced a clause among the additional duties, protecting Irish linen from the importation of cotton manufacture from the Continent. It was a protection to which Ireland was strictly entitled. The Cabinet, free-traders when only Ireland's interests were at stake, struck the paragraph out, and returned the Money Bill without it. There is no folly like that of giving an unreasonable antagonist a moral advantage. The Commons flung the Bill out in a rage; they said distinctly they would never pass a Money Bill which had been altered in England. Heads of a new bill were drawn in which the clause was replaced, and were sent back without a moment's delay. The Cabinet swallowed the affront and yielded. The new bill was returned, compared carefully with the transmiss, and being found unchanged was passed. But 1772 the Revenue question had been re-opened. Flood's resolution had been sent to the king for consideration, and Townshend had but small confidence in Lord North's resolution. Nothing had been allowed which ought to have been allowed. His hands were soiled with work which he detested, and which, after all, was turning out useless. He longed to be clear of it. 'He had been fighting hard for four years,' he said, 'and he had now a right to ask for repose.' He thought the Cabinet unwise in every way; unwise in altering the Money Bill; unwise in submitting when submission wore the complexion of cowardice. 'Concessions to popular opinion,' he said (and the history of Ireland is one long illustration of his words), 'are seldom repaid

with gratitude. They have been interpreted hitherto as foundations only for further claims. It is only by a determined resolution of adhering to system, and by constant perseverance, that the authority of the English Government can be maintained in this kingdom.'

Lord North proved firmer than Townshend expected. On the 5th of February the answer came, that notwithstanding the objections of the House of Commons, his majesty regarded it as his duty to maintain the changes which had been made in the Revenue department. The patriots, of course, pursued the quarrel. Sir Charles Bingham, when the King's reply was delivered in the House, rose and moved that the resolution of the 16th of November should be read. He then declared that the maintenance of the new commissioners was an indignity to the Parliament. Ponsonby following him, proposed that the House should choose a committee to go to London and lay the sentiments of the Irish Commons before the King. The Cabinet, provoked into resolution, declined to be visited by 'Irish Parliamentary Ambassadors.' They bade Townshend prevent the accomplishment of such a piece of foolery at all hazards. If nothing else would do, he must prorogue.[1] It seemed as if once more the Viceroy would be driven to this alternative. One angry motion followed upon another. Flood carried a vote that the House should record its dissent, and followed it with a proposal that members

1772

[1] 'Rochford to Townshend, February 12, 1772.'

of the House who had accepted seats at the new Board were guilty of contempt, and should neither sit nor vote till they had resigned. This was too violent, and was rejected. On the 19th of February, however, the patent for the new commissioners was read aloud. A resolution less extreme was moved, that whoever had advised the increase in the number of commissioners had advised a measure contrary to the sense of the Irish legislature. The numbers on a division were equal—106 in favour, 106 against. Again a question in which the Government was directly assailed turned on the casting vote of the Speaker, and Sexton Pery, who was perfectly well acquainted with the real reasons for the alterations of the Board, and was without the excuse of delusion, did as Ponsonby had done before him, and divided against the Government.

Prorogation or dissolution! To one of these two the Viceroy's choice appeared to be limited, when suddenly the ranks of the Opposition wavered; a combination which had threatened to be irresistible dissolved like a mist. Neither the Commons' Journals nor the Irish Histories explain the change. So much only is visible, that from this time forward the Viceroy was worried with no more adverse resolutions. The new Board went quietly about its work, and for the present no further effort was made to reduce its numbers or drive its members from the House. Once more an address was carried to the Viceroy, in which the Commons declared their entire satisfaction with his excellency's administration, and an amendment conveying in every

sentence the indignation of a baffled faction conscious of defeat was rejected without a division.[1]

The interpretation implied in the language of the amendment is the increase in the army of placemen whose votes were at the Viceroy's disposition. But though the Viceroy had not again appointed to offices of trust men who had divided against him at the most critical moment, the Deus ex machinâ who rescued him from his difficulties was a penitent friend of the people, no less a person than Lord Shannon. When the storm was beginning there had come from that unlooked-for quarter a partial gleam of hope. The Earl, after recovering from his dismissal, had reflected that the English interest might in the long run prove the

---

[1] Proposed amendment to the Address, May 27:—'And we cannot sufficiently congratulate your excellency on your prudent disposition of lucrative offices among the members of this House, whereby your excellency has been enabled to excite gratitude sufficient to induce this House to bear an honourable testimony to an administration which, were it not that it has been found so beneficial to individuals, must necessarily have been represented to his majesty as the most exceptionable and destructive to this kingdom of any that has ever been carried on in it. The carrying into execution the division of the Revenue Board, contrary to the sense of this House, we should have considered and represented as a high contempt of Parliament. But, from the distribution of the multiplied seats at the two boards now instituted among members of this House, we entertain a very different sense of that measure, and conceive that it was carried into execution, not from contempt, but the highest veneration of Parliament, the indignation of which you dreaded, and therefore thus averted. And we assure your excellency we are very much obliged to you for the offices which you have bestowed upon us. We also return you thanks for instituting offices for us at a new Board of Accounts, which, however unnecessary for the public service, we find very serviceable to ourselves.'—*Commons' Journals.*

strongest. He had made private advances to Townshend. Townshend had placed him in communication with Lord North, and had been anxiously expecting the result. A few days after the Speaker's desertion he was able to write to Lord Rochford that Lord Shannon had come to Dublin, and though still appearing to keep aloof from the Castle, 'would by-and-by support the Government upon any terms which his majesty should be pleased to approve.'

'I need not caution your lordship,' he continued, 'how extremely essential it is to the King's service here that this transaction with Lord Shannon, so critical to Government at this period, should not transpire, as its enemies would not fail to take every advantage of it, and to revolt. Lord Shannon appears to wish to return as early as possible to the service of the Crown with the utmost propriety and effect. At the same time, in justice to the use we derive from his conduct, I must request your lordship to lay the circumstances before his majesty, that it may have its due weight. It will account in great measure for the inaction of one desperate faction, and the disappointment of a shameful flying squadron, who have the greatest obligations to the Crown.'[1]

---

[1] 'Townshend to the Earl of Rochford, Feb. 29, 1772. Secret.'

SECTION VI.

From the picture of this astonishing Parliament we turn to the people whom it represented. England in her better days had planted Ireland wih Protestant colonists, who were designed to reclaim and civilize it. Of these colonists the natural leaders enjoyed a self-granted and perpetual leave of absence. The mother country having exchanged Puritan godliness for the commercial gospel, thought fit to paralyze those who remained and were industrious, for the benefit of the Scotch and English manufacturers. The settlers, finding selfishness and injustice the rule of the country, followed naturally so inviting an example.

1772

Before the Whiteboy agitation had abated in Tipperary, similar disturbances, rising from analogous causes, had appeared among the Presbyterian farmers of Ulster. In the south the especial grievances had been the tithing the potato gardens, the enclosure of commons, and the raising of rents. To these, which existed in equal force in the north, was added a form of extortion in the county cess.

'Neither the laws,' wrote Lord Townshend to the Home Secretary, 'nor provincial justice, are administered here as in England. Neither the quarter sessions nor the grand juries give the counties the same speedy relief, nor maintain the like respect, as with us. The chief object of the grand juries is so to dispose of the

county cesses as best suits their party views and private convenience. The sums raised by these gentlemen throughout the kingdom amount to not less than 130,000*l.* per annum, which is levied upon the tenantry, the lower classes of which are in a state of poverty not to be described. It may easily be imagined what the poor people feel when these charges are added to rents already stretched to the uttermost.' [1]

The Ulster Protestants, being more patient and law-abiding than the Catholics of the south, had been peculiarly exposed to these exacting and oppressive cesses. 'It is notorious,' Captain Erskine reported, who was sent by Townshend to the north to examine into the complaints which were brought to him, 'what use is made by grand juries of the powers given them to lay cess for roads and bridges. Jobs upon jobs, one more infamous than another, serve to support the interests of some leading men in the country. I do not believe the roads in any part of the world are as bad as in these five counties; [2] yet I am told they have, from time immemorial, been cessed by their grand juries at 50,000*l.* a year.' [3]

In 1764 parties of the poorer tenants collected under the name Oak Boys, to bring the landlords into more moderate dealing with them. Cattle were houghed or slashed. Farmsteads were burnt. Combinations were formed to resist cess and rent and tithe. The Oak

[1] 'To Rochford, March 18, 1772.'
[2] Derry, Armagh, Tyrone, Down, and Antrim.
[3] 'Captain Erskine to Mr. Lee, April 10, 1772.' S. P. O.

Boys, however, never became formidable, and the landlords had gone on in the high oppressive style which had become natural to them. The increase of the linen trade in the first years of Townshend's Government gave them fresh opportunities. 'The northern Protestants,' in a 'remonstrance' which they sent up to the Government, drew an instructive picture of the treatment to which they had been subjected. During the first half of the century, they said, 'the wise conduct and encouragement of the nobility of Ulster' had so developed the flax manufacture, that the workpeople 'had been enabled to make decent settlements and live comfortably.' The arable lands were all occupied and well cultivated. The inhabitants multiplied, the country prospered. 'The landlords then thirsted to share the people's benefits by raising their rents, which would have been very reasonable in a moderate degree, but of late they had run to great excesses.' 'When the tenant's lease was ended they published in the newspapers that such a parcel of land was to be let, and that proposals in writing would be received for it. They invited every covetous, envious, and malicious person to offer for his neighbour's possessions and improvements. The tenant, knowing he must be the highest bidder or turn out, he knew not whither, would offer more than the value. If he complained to the landlord that the land was too dear, the landlord answered that he knew it was so, but as it was in a trading country, the tenant must make up the deficiency by his industry. Those who possessed the greatest estates were now so rich that

they could not find delicacies in their own country to bestow their wealth on, but carried it abroad, to lavish there the entire days' sweat of thousands of their poor people. They drained the country, and neglected their own duties. Nature assigned the landlord to be a father and counsellor of his people, that he might keep peace and order among them, and protect them and encourage industry. Though the order of things had made it necessary that the lower should serve under the higher, yet the charter of dominion had not said that the lower should suffer by the higher.'[1]

Political economy, though passing into practical life, had not yet become the rule of administrations. George the Third ordered Townshend to do his utmost to convince the landlords of their 'infatuation.'[2] Townshend himself had already introduced a Tenants' Protection Bill into the Irish Parliament, but 'had been defeated by the popularity-hunting party in the House of Commons.'[3] At length a flagrant and enormous act of tyranny set light to the fuel which was lying everywhere ready to kindle.

Sir Arthur Chichester, the great Viceroy of Ireland under James the First, was of all Englishmen who ever settled in the country the most useful to it. His descendant, the Lord Donegal of whom it has become necessary to speak, was, perhaps, the person who inflicted the greatest injury on it. Sir Arthur had been rewarded

[1] 'Remonstrance of the Northern Protestants.'—*Irish MSS.*, 1772. S. P. O.

[2] 'Rochford to Townshend, April 6, 1772.'

[3] 'Townshend to Rochford, March 11.' S. P. O.

for his services by vast estates in the county Antrim. The fifth Earl and first Marquis of Donegal, already, by the growth of Belfast, by the fruits of other men's labours while he was sitting still, enormously rich, found his income still unequal to his yet more enormous expenditure. His name is looked for in vain among the nobles who, in return for their high places, were found in the active service of their country. He was one of those habitual and splendid absentees who discharged his duties to the God who made him by consenting to exist, and to the country which supported him by magnificently doing as he would with his own.

Many of his Antrim leases having fallen in simultaneously, he demanded a hundred thousand pounds in fines for the renewal of them. The tenants, all Protestants, offered the interest of the money in addition to the rent. It could not be. Speculative Belfast capitalists paid the fine, and took the lands over the heads of the tenants to sublet. A Mr. Upton, another great Antrim proprietor, imitated the example, and 'at once a whole country side were driven from their habitations.' The sturdy Scots, who in five generations had reclaimed Antrim from the wilderness, saw the farms which they and their fathers had made valuable let by auction to the highest bidder; and when they refused to submit themselves to robbery, saw them let to others, and let in many instances to Catholics, who would promise anything to recover their hold upon the soil.[1]

[1] I am not ignorant that Arthur Young palliates these evictions. He

'The law may warrant these proceedings, but will not justify them,' wrote Captain Erskine, when the evicted peasants and artisans were meeting to express their sense of them. 'Should the causes of these riots be looked into, it will be found that few have had juster foundations. When the consequences of driving six or seven thousand manufacturing and labouring families out of Ireland come to be felt, I question whether the rectitude of these gentlemen's intentions will be held by the world a sufficient excuse for the irreparable damage they are doing.'[1]

The most substantial of the expelled tenantry gathered their effects together and sailed to join their countrymen in the New World, where the Scotch-Irish became known as the most bitter of the secessionists. Between those who were too poor to emigrate, and the Catholics who were in possession of their homes, there grew a protracted feud, which took form at last in the conspiracy of the Peep of Day Boys; in the fierce and savage expulsion of the intruders, who were bidden go to hell or Connaught; and in the counter-organization of the Catholic Defenders, who spread over the whole island, and made the army of insurrection in 1798. It is rare that two private persons have power to create effects so considerable as to assist in dismembering an empire, and provoking a civil war. Lord Donegal for his services was rewarded with a marquisate, and Mr.

wrote before the consequences which extended from the Old World to the New had distinctly developed themselves.

[1] 'Captain Erskine to Mr. Lee, April 10, 1772.' S. P. O.

Upton with a viscountcy. If rewards were proportioned to deserts, a fitter retribution to both of them would have been forfeiture and Tower Hill.

A precedent so tempting and so lucrative was naturally followed. Other landlords finding the trade profitable began to serve their tenants with notices to quit. The farmers and peasants combined to defend themselves. Where law was the servant of oppression, force was their one resource. They called themselves Hearts of Steel. Their object was to protect themselves from universal robbery. Their resistance was not against the Government—it was against the landlords and the landlords' agents, and nothing else. In the Viceroy they felt rightly that they had a friend, and they appealed to him in a modest petition.

'*Petition of those persons known by the name of Hearts of Steel.*

'That we are all Protestants and Protestant Dissenters, and bear unfeigned loyalty to his present majesty and the Hanoverian succession.

'That we who are all groaning under oppression, and have no other possible way of redress, are forced to join ourselves together to resist. By oversetting our lands we are reduced to poverty and distress, and by our rising we mean no more but to have our lands, that we could live thereon, and procure necessaries of life for ourselves and our starving families.

That some of us refusing to pay the extravagant rent demanded by our landlords have been turned

out, and our lands given to Papists, who will promise any rent.

'That we are sorely aggrieved with the county cesses, which, though heavy in themselves, are rendered more so by being applied to private purposes.

'Yet lest it should be said that by refusing to pay the cess we fly in the face of the law, which we do not intend, we will pay the present cess; and we hope the gentlemen of the county of Down will in future have pity on the distressed inhabitants.

'That it is not wanton folly that prompts us to be Hearts of Steel, but the weight of oppression. Were the cause removed the effects would cease, and our landlords as heretofore live in the affection of their tenants.

'May it please you to enquire into the cause of our grievances, and lend your hand to eschew the evils which seem to threaten the Protestants of the North; and let not false suggestions of men partial to their own cause inflame your wrath against innocent and injured persons, who are far removed from the ear of Government and any other possible means of redress. Oh that the cry of the oppressed might reach the throne of Britain! Our mild and gracious sovereign from his well-known goodness would extend his care to the suffering Protestants in the north of this kingdom.

'BY THE HEARTS OF STEEL.'[1]

Unjust laws provoke and compel resistance. Violence

[1] *Irish MSS.*, 1772. S. P. O.

follows, and crime and guilt; but the guilt, when the account is made up, does not lie entirely with the poor wretch who is called the criminal. The Hearts of Steel destroyed the cattle and farmsteads of the intruding tenants. They attacked gentlemen's houses and lawyers' offices chiefly in search of deeds and leases; of theft they were never accused. Magistrates as usual would not act: they preferred to leave to the Government the odium of repressing riots of which they were themselves the cause. Juries, after the time-honoured fashion, refused to convict, and witnesses to give evidence. The Presbyterian clergy exerted themselves as no one else did, but they did not conceal their opinion that the people were in the right.[1]

Townshend saw the phenomena with eyes unjaundiced. 'He was satisfied that the disturbances sprung from gross iniquity, and that they could be cured only by the lenity of the proprietors, who, if they refused to let their lands on more moderate terms, would compel their tenants to go to America, or to any part of the world where they could receive the reward which was honestly due to their labours.'[2] The House of Commons thought

[1] Address of the Presbytery of Temple Patrick, forwarded by Townshend to London, with the following passage underlined:—'*Now though we, the members of the Presbytery, cannot but lament the heavy oppression that too many are under, from the excessive price of land, and the unfriendly practices of many, who contribute to the oppression by proposing for their neighbours' possessions, by which means they are too often deprived of the improvements made by their forefathers and themselves*, which may be the occasion of the present illegal measure—yet we are convinced that violence defeats its own ends,' &c.

[2] 'Townshend to the Earl of Suffolk, March 21.'

differently. The gentry of the North petitioned for troops to defend them, and the House appointed a committee of enquiry. The facts were on the surface, and might have been comprehended without extreme effort of genius. The Protestants of Ireland were as one to four of the entire population. They were, as has been often said, a garrison set to maintain the law and the English connection. The landlords in stupid selfishness were expelling their Protestant tenantry because Catholics promised them a larger rent. They were driving the very flower of their own army to a country which was already on the edge of rebellion, and uniting in sympathy with that rebellion their comrades who were left behind. An act of such obvious insanity might have been expected to be condemned on the instant by the united voices of the empire. The King saw the infatuation of it; the English Cabinet saw the inconveniences of it, and the Viceroy the iniquity. The Irish Patriot House of Commons could see only an invasion of the rights of landlords. The Committee reported that the increase of rents demanded was not exorbitant. The Hearts of Steel by their resistance were dissolving the bonds of society. The disorders of Ulster required force to check them; and since the northern juries refused to do their duties, it was necessary that prisoners charged with a share in the riots should be tried in counties where they were unknown. In this spirit an Act was carried through Parliament. The Viceroy was called on to employ the army to restore order, and General Gisborne was sent down with as many regiments as could be spared.

General Gisborne executed his orders with moderation. He was received by the people as a friend. They had petitioned Parliament, they said, but Parliament would not answer them. 'The supreme Judge himself' had at length looked upon their distresses and excited them to commotion, 'to cause the landlords, on whom no mild means could prevail, to observe the pale faces and the thin clothing of the honest Protestant subjects who had enriched the country by their industry.' They submitted, not to their masters, but to the English commander: they invited him to restore peace, not by killing them, but by remedying their wrongs.[1] Quiet was easily established. The Hearts of Steel came of a race who had no love for riots; and if redress was refused, they had a better resource than rebellion. The exactions had not been universal, and where attempted were not everywhere persevered in; but mischief irretrievable had been already done. The linen trade from other causes had entered on a period of stagnation, and the consequent distress gave an impetus to the emigration to the land of promise which assumed presently enormous proportions.

Flights of Protestant settlers had been driven out earlier in the century by the idiotcy of the bishops. Fresh multitudes now winged their way to join them, and in no tender mood towards the institutions under which they had been so cruelly dealt with. The House of Commons had backed up the landlords. The next

[1] Remonstrance of the 'Hearts of Steel,' enclosed by Townshend to Lord Suffolk, 1772.

year they had to hear from the Linen Board that 'many thousands of the best manufacturers and weavers with their families had gone to seek their bread in America, and that thousands were preparing to follow.' Again a committee was appointed to enquire. This time the blame was laid on England, which had broken the linen compact, given bounties to the Lancashire millowners which Belfast was not allowed to share, and 'in jealousy of Irish manufactures' had laid duties on Irish sail cloth, contrary to express stipulation. The accusation, as the reader knows, was true. Religious bigotry, commercial jealousy, and modern landlordism had combined to do their worst against the Ulster settlement. The emigration was not the whole of the mischief. Those who went carried their arts and their tools along with them, and at the rate at which the stream was flowing the colonies would soon have no need of British and Irish imports. In the two years which followed the Antrim evictions, thirty thousand Protestants left Ulster for a land where there was no legal robbery, and where those who sowed the seed could reap the harvest. They went with bitterness in their hearts, cursing and detesting the aristocratic system of which the ennobling qualities were lost, and only the worst retained. The south and west were caught by the same movement, and ships could not be found to carry the crowds who were eager to go. 'The emigration was not only depriving Ireland of its manufactures, but of the sinews of its trade.' 'Rich yeomen with their old leases expired' refused to renew them in a

country where they were to live at other men's mercy, and departed with their families and their capital. Protestant settlements which had lingered through the century now almost disappeared. Bandon, Tullamore, Athlone, Kilbeggan, and many other places once almost exclusively English and Scotch, were abandoned to the priests and the Celts.[1] Pitiable and absurd story, on the face of which was written madness!

Industry deliberately ruined by the commercial jealousy of England; the country abandoned to anarchy by the scandalous negligence of English statesmen; idle absentee magnates forgetting that duty had a meaning, and driving their tenants into rebellion and exile; resident gentry wasting their substance in extravagance, and feeding their riot by wringing the means of it out of the sweat of the poor; a Parliament led by patriots, whose love of country meant but the art to embarrass Government, and wrench from it the spoils of office; Government escaping from its difficulties by lavishing gold which, like metallic poison, destroyed the self-respect and wrecked the character of those who stooped to take it; the working members of the community, and the worthiest part of it, flying from a soil where some fatal enchantment condemned to failure every effort made for its redemption—such was the fair condition of the Protestant colony planted in better days to show the Irish the fruits of a nobler belief than their own, and the industrial virtues of a nobler race! Who

[1] 'Report of the Committee of the House of Commons as to Emigration, 1774.'—*Commons' Journals.*

can wonder that English rule in Ireland has become a byeword? who can wonder that the Celts failed to recognize a superiority which had no better result to show for itself?

We lay the fault on the intractableness of the race. The modern Irishman is of no race, so blended now is the blood of Celt and Dane, Saxon and Norman, Scot and Frenchman. The Irishman of the last century rose to his natural level whenever he was removed from his own unhappy country. In the Seven Years' War Austria's best generals were Irishmen. Brown was an Irishman; Lacy was an Irishman; O'Donnell's name speaks for him; and Lally Tollendal, who punished England at Fontenoy, was O'Mullally of Tollendally. Strike the names of Irishmen out of our own public service, and we lose the heroes of our proudest exploits —we lose the Wellesleys, the Pallisers, the Moores, the Eyres, the Cootes, the Napiers; we lose half the officers and half the privates who conquered India for us, and fought our battles in the Peninsula. What the Irish could do as enemies we were about to learn when the Ulster exiles crowded to the standard of Washington. What they can do even at home we know at this present hour, when, under exceptional discipline as police, they are at once the most sorely tempted and the most nobly faithful of all subjects of the British race.

'Realms without justice,' said Henry the Eighth long ago, writing of the same Ireland which is still an unsolved problem, 'be but tyrannies and robories more consonaunt to beastly appetites than to the laudable liff

of reasonable creatures.'[1] When England learns to prefer realities to forms, when she recognizes once for all, that having taken possession of Ireland for her own purposes, she is bound before God and man to make the laws obeyed there, and to deal justly between man and man, disaffection and discontent will disappear, and Ireland will cease to be a reproach; but the experiment remains to be tried.

[1] 'Henry VIII. to the Earl of Surrey.'—*State Papers*, vol. ii. p. 52.

DOWN COUNTY COUNCIL
COUNTY
LIBRARY

CHAPTER III.

LORD HARCOURT AND COLONEL BLAQUIERE.

SECTION I.

LORD TOWNSHEND had said that endeavours were being made to unite the popular party in Ireland and America. There were good reasons 1772
why at that moment these two countries should be of peculiar interest to one another. Ireland was but a colony of longer standing, and the Americans saw a picture there of the condition to which an English colony could be reduced in which the mother country had her own way. Their trade was already exclusively in English hands. In a little while they too might have an established church, interfering with liberty of conscience; their farms, which they had cleared and clothed with corn and orchards, might be claimed by landlords. The Scotch-Irish emigrants especially had their suspicions on the alert, whose grievances were more recent, and whose bitter feelings were kept alive by the continued arrivals from Ulster. None of the Transatlantic settlers had more cause to complain, for none had deserved so well of the country from which they had been driven.

The Protestant settlers in Ireland at the beginning of the 17th century were of the same metal with those who afterwards sailed in the 'May Flower'—Presbyterians, Puritans, Independents, in search of wider breathing space than was allowed them at home. By an unhappy perversity they had fallen under the same stigma and were exposed to the same inconveniences. The bishops had chafed them with persecutions. The noble lords and gentlemen of the Anglo-Irish communion looked askance at them as republicans. The common sufferings of all orders of Protestants in 1641 failed to teach the madness of divisions in so small a body; the heroism with which the Scots held the northern province against the Kilkenny Parliament and Owen Roe O'Neil was an insufficient offset against the sin of nonconformity. The conquest of Ireland was achieved finally by the armies of the Commonwealth, and Leinster and Munster were occupied by Cromwell's troopers as an armed industrial garrison. The shadow which fell on Puritanism at the Restoration once more blighted the new colonies. The soldiers of the Protector changed their swords into ploughshares, repaired the desolation of the civil war, and in a few years so changed the face of Ireland, that the growth of prosperity there stirred the jealousy of Lancashire. But Nonconformity was still a stain for which no other excellence could atone. The persecutions were renewed, but did not cool Presbyterian loyalty. When the native race made their last effort under James the Second to recover their lands, the Calvinists of Derry

won immortal honour for themselves, and flung over the wretched annals of their adopted country a solitary gleam of true glory. Even this passed for nothing. They were still Dissenters, still unconscious that they owed obedience to the hybrid successors of St. Patrick, the prelates of the Establishment; and no sooner was peace re-established than spleen and bigotry were again at their old work. William had so far recognized their merits as to bestow on their ministers a small annual grant. Vexed with suits in the ecclesiastical courts, forbidden to educate their children in their own faith, treated as dangerous to a State which but for them would have had no existence, and associated with Papists in an Act of Parliament which deprived them of their civil rights, the most earnest of them abandoned the unthankful service. They saw at last that the liberties for which they and their fathers had fought were not to be theirs in Ireland. If they intended to live as freemen, speaking no lies, and professing openly the creed of the Reformation, they must seek a country where the long arm of prelacy was still too short to reach them. During the first half of the eighteenth century, Down, Antrim, Tyrone, Armagh, and Derry were emptied of Protestant inhabitants, who were of more value to Ireland than Californian gold mines; while the scattered colonies of the south, denied chapels of their own, and offered, if the ydid not wish to be atheists or Papists, the alternative of conformity or departure, took the Government at their word and melted away

As the House of Hanover grew firmer in its seat, the High Church party declined in power, and dissent as such ceased to be visited with active penalties. The Test Act was not repealed. The municipal offices were still monopolized by members of the Establishment. The State continued to insist on conformity as a condition of employment, military or civil. But the Ulster Presbyterians were saved by the exclusion from being tainted by the universal corruption. Their numbers were repaired with the growth of the linen trade. They were frugal and industrious; their looms and their flax fields prospered with them. Emigration slackened, and the Protestant population had again become an important feature in the community, when the absentee landlords cast their eyes on the wealth which had been silently created, and, in an evil hour, put out their hands to seize it. At once the outflow of Protestants recommenced under changed and far more dangerous conditions. A large commerce had grown up between Belfast and the American plantations. Relations long separated renewed their ties. Intercourse brought exchange of thought, comparison of grievances, and common schemes of redress. The pulses of the industrial classes in the two countries began to beat in perilously earnest sympathy.

One lesson especially the mother country had never ceased to impress upon her colonies, that they existed not for their own sakes, but for hers. Overlooking the circumstances out of which they took their real origin, she regarded them as created by herself, as outlets for

her own productions. They were strictly forbidden to trade with any countries but England and Ireland, or ship their cargoes in any but English vessels.

To these conditions the American colonies had hitherto submitted, as the price of English protection. Their ports were small, the population sparse and generally consisting of farmers, and the articles which they most needed England could best supply. Left to themselves, they might have been worried by Spain, and perhaps invaded and conquered by France.

Lord Chatham had made an end of French rivalry. The Americans shared the glory of a war of which the benefit was so largely theirs. Twenty-four thousand colonists had assisted England to conquer Canada. Four hundred American privateers had driven the French from the coast and the lakes. The war had left England with a debt of 148 millions. It was suggested at the Peace of Paris that the colonies should contribute something towards the interest of it, and the colonists did not dispute their equitable liability. Had Pitt been still in power, some arrangement might perhaps have been successfully attempted. Grenville's less delicate hand provoked the first dispute. He suggested in 1764 the extension of the stamp duty to America, under the authority of the English Parliament. From authority to impose a tax the step to despotism was short, and, it was feared, certain. When once the consent of the taxpayer, through his representative, was held unnecessary, no second barrier remained.

America remonstrated, not violently, for she offered

to find a substitute; but she stood out upon the principle. Grenville and Charles Townshend stood upon principle as well. In 1765, in spite of caution from wiser heads, the colonial stamp duty was imposed by Parliament; Charles Townshend, talking of 'our American children planted by our care, nourished by our indulgence, now fitly contributing to the necessities of the State.' 'They planted by your care!' Colonel Barré replied; 'your oppression planted them. They nourished by your indulgence! they grew by your neglect of them.' Both positions were true. But for Anglican bishops there would have been no Puritan exiles. But for Pitt, America would have been French. The remembrance of wrong is longer lived than gratitude for benefits received. Virginia resisted. New England resisted. Congresses met, and drew declarations of colonial rights. The Stamp Act was disobeyed; business went on as if the Act did not exist; and in the following year, being obviously useless, it was abandoned. The Act repealing it, however, reasserted the right of England to tax the colonies, if she pleased to exercise that right; and the provincial Legislature of New York, which had given special offence, was suspended, as an admonition to the rest.

America having secured the substance of the victory, did not quarrel about words. So long as the claim was not enforced, it was harmless. The colonists did not anticipate a renewal of the experiment; but England had been touched in her pride. In 1767 Charles Townshend brought the question to an issue

once more. A Stamp Act could be evaded without serious inconvenience. Customs duties being levied at the ports could be evaded only by a refusal to consume the articles on which they were imposed. A small tax, just sufficient to try the principle, was laid on glass, paper, and tea. The Massachusetts Chambers passed a resolution that these duties should not be levied. Being required to rescind a vote which was held an act of rebellion, they re-affirmed it by a majority of 92 to 17. Ships of war were sent out with a couple of regiments. Boston decided to arm in opposition; and the colonies generally, following Irish precedent, came to a common resolution that they would import nothing of any kind from England till the duties were abandoned. To the restriction of their commerce they had submitted. The sea might be part of the British dominions. Taxation they would not submit to while they were unrepresented in the British Parliament.

Half alarmed, half exasperated, the English Government took a middle course, and the worst which they could have chosen. They abandoned the duties on glass and paper; they retained a nominal tea duty. Had they tried force at once, they might have crushed the colonies in detail, and for a time have broken them down. Had they made a frank surrender, the colonies for a time also would have refrained from raising the question of separation. They maintained the cause of the irritation; they took no active steps to compel obedience. Ill-feeling grew rapidly. Bloody riots broke out in Boston between the garrison and the

citizens. For four years, through the thirteen colonies, in town and village, tea, which had become a necessary of life, disappeared from the breakfast-table. At length the decrease of consumption having created a glut in the East Indian warehouses, and as it was supposed that by this time the colonists would be weary of the strife, it was determined to tempt their constancy with a supply of the coveted luxury at a price which, notwithstanding the duty, was still lower than Americans had ever paid for it before.

The tea ships generally were prevented from making their way into the American harbours, or else
1773 were sent back without being allowed to unload. A ship which entered Boston harbour was less fortunate. A party of men, disguised as Mohawk Indians in their war-paint, stole on board one midnight, overpowered the crew, burst the chests open, and emptied them into the sea.

Struck thus in the face, England lost its temper and its prudence. The port of Boston was de-
1774 clared to be closed until the tea was paid for. The Massachusetts charter was recalled, and, by a new constitution, the colony was placed under the Government of Quebec. General Gage was sent out in haste with reinforcements, attended by a squadron, to occupy the harbour. He landed on the 13th of May, took military possession of the town, and fortified the peninsula to which it was then confined. The colonial Legislature, not recognizing the dissolution, assembled a few miles off at Concord, organized a separate ad-

ministration, and called the settlers to arms. All down the seaboard to the Carolinas the alarm spread of danger to liberty. If Massachusetts was overwhelmed, each State knew that its own turn would follow. A Congress met at Philadelphia. The deputies of thirteen States agreed that they would pay no taxes, direct or indirect, to which their consent had not been asked. They stood by their non-importation agreement. They appealed to the British nation, and to Britain's Sovereign and theirs. To the British people they said, 'Place us as we were when the war ended, and we shall be satisfied.' To the King they said that in peace they cost Great Britain nothing; in war they had contributed hitherto to the imperial expenses, and would continue to contribute: they asked nothing but that their rights under the constitution should not be invaded.

Dr. Franklin, who had been long in England, and was personally intimate with many of the chief English statesmen, took charge of the address to the Crown. He was leaning on the bar of the House of Lords when the question was debated in that assembly whether he should be allowed to present it. At that great crisis in his country's future, Chatham came once more to the front. 1775

Si Pergama dextrâ
Defendi possent etiam hâc defensa fuissent.

Chatham's name was honoured in America beyond that of every other Englishman. He insisted on the madness or the wickedness of using force in an unnatural quarrel. America was willing to admit the

supremacy of the Imperial Parliament. America would not refuse to contribute of her own accord for the interest of the war debts. England must meet her with a frank confession that if she was to be taxed, her own consent was necessary; that it was unlawful to employ the army to destroy the rights of the people; the port of Boston must be thrown open again, and Gage and his troops must be recalled.

So advised the greatest of living Englishmen, who had raised his country to the proudest eminence which she had attained since the death of the Protector. But Lord North and his Cabinet desired to be thought better patriots than Chatham. Lord Sandwich moved that Chatham's propositions could not be entertained. Glancing at Franklin, he said that he had in his eye the person by whom they had been drawn—the most mischievous and bitterest enemy the country had ever known.

Franklin could not answer, but Chatham did. His words were his own, he said. He had given the House his own opinion; but had he needed help, he would not have been ashamed of asking it 'from one whom all Europe esteemed, who was an honour not to the English nation only, but to human nature.' The House of Lords went with Sandwich, and determined by a great majority that the colonists should be taught their duties. The Cabinet felt more uncertainty than they confessed. Private conferences were held with Franklin; and Franklin, to whom, as to those by whom he was employed, a dismemberment of the empire was no

trifling thing to be rushed after with foolish haste, was most earnest to suggest means by which the catastrophe could be averted. He undertook that the tea should be paid for; and that the colonies should contribute to war expenses. If England would relinquish her monopolies and give them free trade, they would do all which was expected of them. On the other hand, as Chatham had said, the duties must be abandoned and the troops be withdrawn. The Imperial Parliament must disclaim a right to legislate for the internal regulation of the colonies, and the cancelled charter must be restored to Massachusetts.

To most of these conditions Lord North was ready to agree. The negotiation went off upon a point of honour. All else might be conceded, but England could not humble herself before Massachusetts. At all risks the new Constitution must be upheld. For this feather terms infinitely more favourable than we now dare demand from our remaining dependencies were idly rejected. Franklin carried back the news that he had failed, and a new page was turned in the history of mankind.

Both sides had paused upon their arms till the answer came. Debate was then over. It was now for action to decide between them. The Massachusetts Congress had employed the winter in collecting stores at Concord. Gage finding the issue to be war, resolved on dealing a vigorous blow. On the night of the 18th of April he despatched Colonel Smith with 800 grenadiers to destroy the magazines. Concord is twenty

miles from Boston. Lexington is a village on the road a few miles short of it. In Lexington Street, at five in the morning of the 19th, a party of Massachusetts militia were assembled, uncertain (as before the first blood is shed in a civil war men always are uncertain) what they were precisely to do. The troops settled the question by firing on them. They scattered. Colonel Smith went on, accomplished his work, and was again returning on the same road when he found the houses in Lexington, and the walls and hedges outside it, lined with riflemen. The soldiers, tired with a thirty-mile march and encumbered with their knapsacks, found themselves received with a close and deadly fire from practised marksmen. Their enemies were country farmers and farm servants, trained as hunters in the woods, and light of foot as they were skilful in aim. They would have been destroyed without a chance of defending themselves, had not Gage, who had heard of what had passed in the morning, sent forward reinforcements. Fresh troops arriving on the scene drove the Americans off, and the shattered grenadiers reached Boston at sunset with a loss of nearly half their strength.

The effect of the battle of Lexington was to enclose the British within the lines of the city. The headquarters of the Americans were pushed forward to Cambridge, four miles only outside the walls, and Gage's communications with the country were wholly cut off. The inglorious investment it was thought could be but of short duration. Regiments were pouring in from

England. General Howe arrived at the beginning of the summer, and decided to give the colonists a decisive lesson without loss of time. The Peninsula of Charlestown is divided from that of Boston Proper by six hundred yards of water which are now bridged over. The Charlestown ridge ascends with a gentle slope from the shore, commanding the harbour and the city opposite. The highest points of it, known as Breed's Hill and Bunker's Hill, are nearly two hundred feet above the sea. The Americans pushing forward from Cambridge had entrenched themselves on the brow of this ridge. They had brought up cannon which distressed the ships in the harbour, and threw shot into the army quarters in the town. The entire American force amounted to no more than 1500 men, and those only untrained militia. Such a body was thought unable to resist even for a moment a superior number of regular troops. On the 17th of June Sir William Howe crossed over with 3000 men to drive them off. Covered by a heavy fire from the guns of the fleet, he advanced with easy confidence. The Americans waited till the English were close upon their lines, and then poured in a fire so deadly that they reeled backwards down the hill in astonished confusion. They rallied rapidly, again charged, and again retired before the tremendous reception which they encountered. Determined to win the hill or die, they rushed up a last time and plunged over the breastwork; and then, but only then, and at leisure and in good order, the Massachusetts farmers withdrew. That one summer afternoon's work had

cost the British army more then eleven hundred men, of whom ninety were officers. Sir William Howe might have said, like Pyrrhus, that a few more such victories would end the dream of the conquest of America.

And who and what were these provincial militia who had given the soldiers of England so rude a lesson? Most of them, no doubt, were descendants of the ancient Puritan stock, reinforced from the old country from time to time by men who had the same quarrel as their fathers with the constituted authorities in Church and State.

But throughout the revolted colonies, and, therefore, probably in the first to begin the struggle, all evidence shows that the foremost, the most irreconcilable, the most determined in pushing the quarrel to the last extremity, were the Scotch Irish whom the bishops and Lord Donegal and Company had been pleased to drive out of Ulster. 'It is a fact beyond question,' says Plowden, 'that most of the early successes in America were immediately owing to the vigorous exertions and prowess of the Irish emigrants who bore arms in that cause.'[1] Ramsay says the Irish in America were almost to a man on the side of Independence. 'They had fled from oppression in their native country, and could not brook the idea that it should follow them. Their national prepossessions in favour of liberty were strengthened by their religious opinions. They were Presbyterians, and therefore mostly Whigs.'[2]

[1] PLOWDEN, vol. ii. p. 178.

[2] *History of the American Revolution*, p. 597.

There is a Bunker's Hill[1] close outside Belfast. Massachusetts tradition has forgotten how the name came to the Charlestown Peninsula. It is possible that the connection with Ireland is a coincidence. It is possible that the name of a spot so memorable in American history was brought over by one of those exiles, whose children saw there the beginning of the retribution that followed on the combination of follies which had destroyed the chance of making Ireland a Protestant country, and had filled Protestant Ulster with passionate sympathy for the revolted colonists.

---

[1] Bunker's Hill is supposed to be a corruption of Brunker's Hill. Captain Brunker was an officer who came to Ulster with Lord Essex in 1572, and received a grant of land in Antrim.

SECTION II.

GEORGE THE THIRD had intended to end corruption in the Irish Parliament. The effect of Lord Townshend's efforts had been to make it more corrupt than before. Where the laws by which a country is to be governed depend on the voices of representatives, and where these representatives acknowledge no motive but private interest, bribery is the only method by which the administration can be carried on. The House of Commons had been controlled hitherto by an oligarchy, who shared the patronage of Ireland among them as if it had been a family inheritance. The Viceroy, with the assistance of the rank and file, had wrested the public offices out of the hands of the men who had preyed on the revenue so long and so systematically; but he had bought his victory by borrowing his adversaries' weapons, making office the reward of Parliamentary subserviency; and when preferments could not be had to feel the voracity of his supporters, he had added further to the bloated Pension List. Success so purchased can be continued only by the means by which it has been obtained. The interesting lords and gentlemen who constituted the two Houses of the Irish Legislature understood the value of their assistance from the Viceroy's eagerness to secure it. Those who had sold their votes for a single measure or group of measures were like the possessors of some fatal secret, whom a person afraid of

1772

disclosure had been rash enough to bribe to silence. The claimants for Crown favour could not all be satisfied, but neglect to satisfy them brought immediate retribution. Townshend's majorities dwindled, and at length disappeared. With disgust he drew out the list of the traitors who had disowned their obligations. He found he could rely on them no more, and in despairing contempt he fell back on the most powerful of the aristocracy whom he had defeated. Lord Shannon returned with a smile to the assistance of a Viceroy who had been the victim of a delusion that Ireland could be honourably governed by a Parliament of its own. The Opposition was disarmed, and Ponsonby was obliged to part with his hope of driving the Viceroy in disgrace from the country.

Townshend, however, was himself disinclined to bear longer a burden which had become hateful to him. For four years he had been attempting a task which it was impossible to accomplish. He petitioned to be allowed to resign, and his request was granted. He retired with the thanks and compliments of the Parliament, his relations with which had undergone such strange vicissitudes. He left behind him one work, though one work only, of permanent improvement. His new Revenue Board was soon abandoned to clamour. But the great families were no longer allowed to abuse the authority of the Crown under the name of Lords Justices. The Viceroy of Ireland was henceforth to be resident through his term of office, unless for brief intervals and on unforeseen occasions.

Townshend's successor was a nobleman the very reverse of himself in every feature of intellect and temperament. Townshend was energetic, brilliant, and in the prime of his years, and Harcourt was over sixty, decorous, dignified, inured by habit to the inanities of Courts, with views generally honourable, but pursuing them with languor, with the smallest imaginable insight into Ireland and its conditions, and with an indolent cunning in the place of statesmanship. He had been for nine years tutor to the King before his accession. He had negotiated the alliance between his master and the Princess Charlotte. He would have passed as no more than an ornamental lay figure through a life which he ended strangely by falling down a well at Nuneham, except for his Irish viceroyalty; it came to him at an unlucky time, and brought his figure into distinct visibility.

With Lord Harcourt arrived a satellite very far more interesting than his primary, the Secretary, John de Blaquiere, himself a Colonel of Dragoons, descendant from a Huguenot family, who had come to England at the beginning of the century. De Blaquiere's character will reveal itself in the progress of the story. To Lord North he writes with a confidential familiarity which shows that they were on terms of closest intimacy. He describes himself in one of his letters to Lord North as 'your threadpaper friend,' which, perhaps, sufficiently expresses his appearance.

Like his predecessor, the new Viceroy was directed 'absolutely to discourage all applications for pensions, salaries, and offices, for new peerages, or advancement

of peers already existing to higher titles;' to prohibit 'the sale of offices or employments, notwithstanding the present proprietor may have purchased the same.'[1] The era of purity was at last to begin. Lord Harcourt landed at Ringsend on the 30th of November, 1772, with a year of quiet still before him, Parliament not meeting till the beginning of the following autumn. A week later Townshend left Dublin amidst general acclamations, Harcourt being, as he confessed, glad to be rid 'of his rather overpowering presence.' For himself he described his prospects as most flattering. The Duke of Leinster, to mark his delight at the change, wrote to him most affectionately. Lord Kildare stood at his side in the viceregal box the first evening on which he was at the play. Shannon was 'most polite.' John Ponsonby had been at the levée, 'perhaps determined by Lord Shannon.' Flood had been there also, indicating that he was not unwilling to be taken into service. It appeared that Flood, the most eloquent and passionate of Townshend's opponents, had already been feeling his way towards employment with Lord Frederick Campbell, Townshend's secretary. Campbell had mocked him with promises which had been left unfulfilled. Like so many of his countrymen, his chief ambition was to hold office under the rule which he affected to execrate, but he was wary of being again deceived.[2]

---

[1] 'Rochford to Lord Harcourt, October 26, 1772. Secret and confidential.'

[2] Harcourt, writing afterwards to Lord North, said that Flood told him that 'he had been determined

The compliments of the reception being over, the realities followed. The noble Lords were well disposed, but on their own conditions. A few days after the new Viceroy's arrival, Lord Shannon asked for a private interview, to submit as usual the terms on which the Government might have his support. Two of the St. Legers, it will be remembered, were claimants for the Doneraile title. Townshend, after playing with both, had recommended one of them, though the decision had been postponed. Shannon recommended the other, who was his own cousin. Mr. St. Leger St. Leger must be created Lord Doneraile. Mr. Denham Jephson, of Mallow, must have a pension of 600*l.* a year. Mr. Lysaght must be governor of Cork, with the rank of major-general. Mr. James Dennis, M.P. for Youghal, must be Prime Sergeant, or Attorney or Solicitor-general, whichever office should first fall vacant.[1] Mr. Townshend, member for Cork, must be a Commissioner of the Revenue; and the Dean of Cork must have a bishopric on the first opportunity.

Lord Shannon, the Viceroy wrote, 'was extremely candid and explicit.' He went to the point without circumlocution. His ultimate attitude was to depend on the treatment which he received; but he promised at any rate to stand by Government for one session. The Viceroy 'pleaded hard' 'for 400*l.* a year for Mr.

never more to have any dealings with the Castle, that paid so little regard to engagements. *He had been treated extremely ill by Lord Frederick Campbell in Lord Townshend's time.*'—'Harcourt to Lord North, July 8, 1774. Most private and confidential.'

[1] Dennis was made Prime Sergeant in 1774.

Jephson, but Lord Shannon said he could not prevail on Mr. Jephson to accept less than 600*l.*' 'Lord Shannon,' Harcourt concluded, 'is very powerful, and it may be well to secure his support.'

While the Viceroy was being introduced to the mysteries of corruption, his secretary, Colonel de Blaquiere, was passing through an ordeal of a more fiery kind. The secretary being the channel through which applications for favours generally passed, Irish society was anxious to learn the qualifications of the new arrival. Mr. Beauchamp Bagenal, member for Carlow, a notorious duellist, with a reputation almost European, wrote to De Blaquiere for leave of absence for a relation who was with his regiment in America. De Blaquiere replied politely that to give leave to officers on service did not lie within the Viceroy's province. To his extreme surprise, Bagenal instantly challenged him. When Irish gentlemen made requests they were to be granted. Inability was no answer. De Blaquiere understood the situation in a moment. He had no knowledge of his fire-eating antagonist, nor had he dreamt of offending him; but in compliance with the universal sentiment of the whole kingdom, he saw that he must acquiesce. They met the next morning at the thorn-trees in the Phœnix, the usual trysting place. At Mr. Bagenal's request, they were placed 'nearer than usual.' De Blaquiere fired in the air. His adversary took a deliberate aim; his pistol missed fire; he recocked it a second and again a third time, with the same result. De Blaquiere advised him to look

at his flint. He rapped the edge of it with a key, and drew the trigger once more, but once more unsuccessfully.

'At the colonel's request Mr. Bagenal then changed his flint.' This time the pistol went off, the ball passing through the colonel's hat and grazing his temple. De Blaquiere took his second pistol, and was about to fire in the air again. Bagenal graciously insisted that he should aim at him. De Blaquiere said he had no quarrel with Mr. Bagenal, and could not think of it. Mr. Bagenal 'behaved with great politeness and intrepidity,' entreating that the colonel would not refuse him the honour of, &c. &c. It was in vain. De Blaquiere would not do him the honour at all. Bagenal would have made a new quarrel of it, but the seconds interfered. It was agreed that De Blaquiere had behaved 'astonishingly well.' The affair ended, and the colonel was the most popular secretary that had ever held office in Dublin.[1]

Preliminaries over, it was now time for business. Townshend's operations in Parliament had been frightfully costly. The Treasury was 300,000*l.* in arrear. The revenue was falling off, owing to the stoppage of the colonial trade. The expenditure seemed to admit of no reduction, except in the Pension List, but in this direction there was small likelihood of reform. The King was alive to the impropriety of granting pensions in Ireland, but was less scrupulous with his own relations. North, with acknowledged reluctance, had to

[1] 'Lord Harcourt to the Earl of Rochford, March 4, 1773.'

inform Lord Harcourt that the King had determined to place the Queen of Denmark on the Irish establishment.[1] It had been found necessary to suspend all payments except to the army. Some provision must be made before the meeting of Parliament. From the earliest times Irish patriotism had clamoured against the absentees. Popularity might be acquired, the revenue might be increased, and a real injury brought in the way of redress, if the remarkable lords and gentlemen who had for generations been receiving their incomes for duties unperformed were to be made to choose between residence and parting with a tenth of their spoils to the State. The remaining nine-tenths they might still keep to themselves.

Lord North gave his cordial approval. The central fountain of Irish misery had been for the moment recognized by him. Those in whose behalf the land of Ireland had been taken from its owners to provide better government for the people, had forgotten as much as if it had never existed, that any such obligation attached to them. A faint far off glimmer of the truth had broken upon an English Prime Minister. As there was no land tax in Ireland, the absentees, in fact, contributed nothing for those vast possessions of theirs. It was time to call upon them.

The tax was to have been proposed as a Government measure at the autumn Irish session. Unluckily the design leaked out prematurely, and was received in England with a shout of indignation. Great English

[1] 'Lord North to Harcourt, March 29, 1773. Most secret.'

noblemen conceived apparently that they did Ireland too much honour already in consenting to own part of her soil. The Duke of Devonshire, Lord Bessborough, Lord Rockingham, Lord Fitzwilliam, and Fitzpatrick of Upper Ossory, entered an ironical protest. 'They had estates in England as well as in Ireland,' they said. 'They could not reside on both, and they were not to be punished for exercising their natural right to reside where they pleased.' In days when high offices of State were held as sinecures, when pluralism was permitted in the Church, and duties were held to be adequately discharged when one man did the work and another received the pay for it, landlords might naturally be surprised when brought to account so sharply. 'I hear,' wrote Lord North, 'that Lord Shelburne and some others declare that a Minister deserves to be impeached who advises his majesty to return such a bill to Ireland. Lord Mansfield has told some of the Cabinet in confidence that he thinks we are in a scrape, from which he would advise us to get out as soon as possible. If way is given to this measure, we may expect similar proposals from all our colonies, who will be earnest to load with impositions such of their countrymen as prefer to reside in Great Britain.'

'Notwithstanding the clamour,' Lord North said he was prepared to stand by his proposition on certain conditions. The Absentee Tax was part of a general scheme, by which Townshend's reforms were to be made permanent realities, and the Irish revenue, especially the hereditary branch of it, was to be pro-

tected from peculation. This must be the work of the Irish Parliament, and if fairly taken up and carried through, would enable him to encounter Lord Shelburne's and his friends' displeasure.

But 'nothing less,' he said, 'than consenting to the whole, can enable us to stand the odium of assenting to so Anti-British a measure. We must be able to say we found Ireland 400,000*l.* in debt, and running annually 120,000*l.* in arrears; that a plan was sent over by the Irish Parliament which would provide for the debt, and render the income for the future equal to the establishment; that the tax on absentees was so blended with the rest of the plan, that whatever we might think of it separately, we could not resist it without risking the whole. If the Irish gentlemen adopt your proposals, I for one shall be ready to meet all this noise and clamour.' [1]

Lord North was really in earnest, but neither his wishes nor his courage were shared by the rest of the Cabinet. Absenteeism had been for centuries the popular grievance of Ireland. Now at length, when it was about to be attacked, Ireland seemed scarcely to know its own mind. The absentees were powerful through their property. Lord Bessborough, one of the five protesting lords, commanded the great Ponsonby interest. Worried by letters from England, perplexed by the division among his Irish advisers, and though himself in favour of the tax, without resolution to stand by it, Harcourt considered he would best consult Lord

[1] 'Lord North to Harcourt, October 29, 1773.'

North's comfort if he could quietly let the matter drop, and use the Irish Opposition to get rid of it. It was a delicate manœuvre. Constant in little else, Irish politicians never varied in their jealousy and suspicion of England. Absenteeism had been valuable to them as a grievance while it could be used against the British connection—more useful, perhaps, for this object, while it flourished unchecked, than if diminished or assailed by England itself. While England was ready to offer an Absentee Tax, they hesitated whether to receive it. If they were allowed to suppose that England was withdrawing it, their eagerness would infallibly revive.

The Viceroy opened the Parliament on the 26th of October. His speech was looked for with anxiety. Would or would not the Absentee Tax be mentioned in it? The speech was general—the subject was not touched on.

'I admire your lordship's fortitude in supporting the tax,' the Viceroy wrote to Lord North, 'and value your kindness. The opinion of some of the wisest and most experienced men in this kingdom, the general wishes of the people for half a century past, and the exigencies of the Government, led me to press it on your lordship. This, however, like every other mode of taxation, must naturally irritate those whose hitherto untaxed estates would principally be affected by it, and be attended with inconveniences, though inadequate to the advantages it must produce. Not to embarrass your lordship, as soon as I saw how things were going, with the help of our friends here, I have obstructed the progress of

the tax for the present. We mean to allow it to be moved in the House by a certain wild inconsistent gentleman,[1] who has signified such to be his intention. This will be sufficient to damn the measure, though no other means be employed against it.'[2]

'Other means,' however, were not neglected. 'The letter of the five lords,'[3] Lord Harcourt said, he could have used with effect, if he had wished the bill to pass, to create exasperation against the absentees. 'Having, or at least wishing, to give up that object,' he had tried to spread a fear that an Absentee Tax might be a preliminary to a general Land Tax. And if he could only appear neutral, if he could only persuade the House of Commons that he had no wishes save that they should decide entirely for themselves, 'such was their capricious instability, that he imagined this much-sought-for boon would die of itself.'[4]

To create the desired impression some active steps were necessary. Though the measure was not yet formally before the House, it had been already touched upon. De Blaquiere, ready for any emergency in field or council, rose to speak upon it. For himself he said he was a warm advocate of a proposal which he believed would be the salvation of Ireland, but he had been staggered by the variety of opinions which he had lately heard. They had not convinced him; he adhered to

---

[1] The journals do not permit the identification of this gentleman.

[2] 'Harcourt to Lord North, November 9.'

[3] The protest of the Duke of Devonshire, &c.

[4] Ibid.

his own impression; but he desired the House to understand that the administration would be guided entirely by the judgment of the Irish Parliament. They wished not to lead but to follow. The wisdom of the House would alone influence the Government, and should determine his own personal conduct. He laid his heart upon their table, and he placed himself at their disposition: 'under the strange revolution of sentiment which the subject had undergone, he said that it should surprise no one if he and his best friend divided on different sides of the House.'

Lord North meanwhile assisted the illusion. He had replied to the five protesting noblemen that the Absentee Tax was part of a scheme for the re-organization of Irish finance, and as such he intended to support it. The answer gave universal satisfaction in Dublin. Here at any rate was a really honest English minister. 'The generality of people took another turn.' The fear of the Land Tax might perhaps be chimerical. The Absentee Tax after all was a desirable one, and England evidently desired to carry it. Towards the end of the month the Viceroy began to fear that his part had been overacted, and that he might be unable to prevent the bill from being carried 'without betraying a degree of inconsistency which might be prejudicial to his majesty's affairs.'[1] The Viceroy assumed in his letters that Lord North agreed with him in the desire that the measure should be checked. Lord North's own expressions show rather that his own personal wish was to see

[1] 'Lord Harcourt to Lord North, November 22. Private.'

it successful, and regretted sincerely the English opposition. He complained that the Irish were cutting their own throats by hesitating about it. 'The lords and gentlemen who had estates in Ireland and reside here,' he wrote on the 23rd of November, 'have held a meeting and retained Mr. Dunning and Mr. Lee to plead before the Privy Council. The city of London are preparing their Recorder for the same purpose. I do not fear the eloquence of these gentlemen so much as the universal prejudice which prevails against the measure, and the want of argument to defend it and to reconcile people's minds to it.' [1]

Amidst cross purposes in which Lord North and a handful of the Irish members were alone honest, the question came directly before the House of Commons on the 25th of November. 'The wild inconsistent gentleman,' to whom the conduct of the measure had been relegated that he might destroy it, moved in the usual language of vague vituperation that it was expedient that a tax should be imposed upon Absentee landowners. This was at once rejected as too indefinite. Mr. Oliver, member for Limerick, proposed that a tax of two shillings in the pound should be laid on all net rents and profits payable to persons who did not reside in Ireland six months in the year. On this the debate was described as 'very warm and able.' The usual combinations were broken up. Pery, Flood, Tisdall, Bushe, Longfield, Dennis, the popular leaders of the

[1] 'Lord North to the Earl of Harcourt, November 23. Most private and confidential.'

Opposition, were strongly in favour of the motion. The patrician pseudo-patriots, the landed magnates, who were allied with the English aristocracy, John Ponsonby, Tom Conolly, Sir Charles Bingham, and the members returned by the Duke of Leinster spoke on the side of the party who were looked on as satellites of the Castle. The equity of the tax was admitted universally. The Opposition turned 'on the impolicy of irritating against Ireland people of high rank in England, the probability that it would lower the value of land, that the absentees would throw their estates upon the market, and that Ireland would be invaded by flights of foreign purchasers. Lord Harcourt's treacherous suggestions too were not forgotten. 'They did unanimously and in the most violent manner inveigh against the insidious and deep designs of the English Government to introduce by these means a general Land Tax.'

Blaquiere spoke again to protest against so unjust a suspicion. Flood argued, and the Attorney-general with him, that if an Absentee Tax was adopted, other taxes could be taken off; and that Ireland would be no loser by the sale of the absentees' estates. 'They would be sold probably in small portions to Irish gentlemen of moderate means, and produce that division of property and residence of proprietors which the legislature ought to desire.' Pery, the Speaker, urged, with great justice, that the absentees, though paying ten per cent. on their income, would still contribute less to the Irish revenue than the resident gentry who were bur-

dened with the Customs and Excise. At two in the morning the House divided, and the motion was lost by 120 to 106. . . . 'Thus,' wrote Lord Harcourt, 'the long-expected measure which for ages has been the constant topic of their discourse, the warmest object of their complaints and wishes, and still within these three months considered as too important an acquisition ever to be hoped for by their country, has been rejected by a majority of fourteen.'.

Had he been as eager for the success of the attempt as he avowedly had manœuvred to defeat it, he could not have spoken more bitterly of a Parliament, which, for once, and with a small effort, he might have persuaded to do right. 'Such an instance,' he said, 'of caprice and instability is, perhaps, hardly to be met with, and will mark the temper of the gentlemen of this country which every Lord-Lieutenant has to encounter.'

[1] 'The Earl of Harcourt to Lord North, November 26.'

SECTION III.

An Act which would have induced the London Companies to part with their estates, and have either compelled the absentees to return or have led them to the same alternative, would, on many accounts, have been of priceless service. Not the least so, that as Catholics were still unable to hold real property in Ireland, it would have recruited the ranks of the Protestant gentry with new and wholesome elements. The House of Commons were not happy over their work, and many a gentleman who had voted in the majority would have gladly seen the measure passed in spite of him. The members re-assembled the next day in ill-temper with themselves and one another. Mr. O'Neil, of Shane Castle, Lord O'Neil afterwards, though he had been an active opponent, had now changed his mind, and moved that the question should be reconsidered. At once 'a frenzy' in favour of a proposal which had been maturely debated and deliberately rejected 'seemed suddenly to possess every member present.' 'Mr. Flood was violent and able in a degree surpassing everything which he had uttered before. It appeared as if he meant to crush to destruction the Duke of Leinster's party and Mr. Ponsonby, against whom he made such a personal attack as the poor gentleman would never recover.' [1]

[1] 'The Earl of Harcourt to Lord North, November 27.'

'With a satisfaction that he could ill express,' the Viceroy was able to assure Lord North three days later that all was again over, and this time finally. He had discovered, or thought he had discovered, that sinister influences were at work under the surface, and that the opposition to the bill and the effort to reinstate it was due rather to political faction than to any care for Ireland's welfare. There was again a nine hours' debate, and at the end of it the motion for reconsideration was rejected without a division.

'We last night,' reported the Viceroy on the 30th, 'defeated the boldest and deepest attack made on the administration of both countries, and conducted, surprised as you may be to hear it, by his majesty's Attorney-general. We laboured with all our might to save appearances in the conduct of those faithful friends of the administration who were obliged to adopt to a certain extent the other side of the question.'[1]

Most brilliant and never sufficiently to be admired dexterity. A difficulty had been got rid of which might have raised differences between the Cabinet and its English friends, while the Irish Government had gained the credit of seeming to favour an important popular measure. Lord North's congratulations were warmer than might have been expected from his previous language. Ireland's great measure had been thrown out by Ireland herself, and still more satisfactorily, 'without any promises of peerage or pension.' 'Your Excellency's campaign,' said the premier, 'has

[1] 'To Lord North, November 30.'

been most glorious and successful. The Irish Government will now be carried on with credit and tranquillity. His majesty is extremely pleased with you.' [1]

His majesty probably knew as much about the matter as his ministers told him. The secret history, if any one cares to look further into so dirty a business, appears to have been this. Lord Rockingham had supposed that Lord North really desired the Absentee Tax to be carried, and had, therefore, entirely irrespective of whether the measure was good or bad, advised his friends to oppose it. The truth had come to be suspected in Ireland, and a change of front had been attempted too late. 'If,' wrote the Viceroy, 'the marquis and his friends pretended to suppose you are greatly hurt and disappointed at what has happened in Ireland, they ought not to be undeceived. The more that idea prevails, the greater credit and honour will be derived from it, and the shame and disgrace will fall to the share of others. On the whole, the late event, which could have no other object than throwing everything into confusion, has proved fortunate. It has strengthened the hands of the administration, and has afforded matter of caution against the machinations of restless and ambitious men.' [2]

Successes dishonestly gained seldom come to much. Political secrets known to many are never secrets long, and the Viceroy's expected tranquillity for the rest of the session proved an illusion. Once more the House of

[1] 'Lord North to Lord Harcourt, December 9.'

[2] 'The Earl of Harcourt to Lord North, December 15.'

Commons was set vibrating on the vital question of the initiation of money bills. Blackstone had just commended the jealousy with which the English Commons maintained their privileges when a grant was made to the Sovereign. That Ireland should be denied the same honour was a badge of dependency; and the meddling of the English Council with the Bills of Supply was intended and was felt as a perpetual reminder of their chains. The heads of the three Supply Bills of 1773 had been voted and sent to England as usual. The substance was satisfactory, for on the loss of the Absentee Act the Customs duties had been raised to cover the deficit. But to maintain the English assumption a few verbal changes were nevertheless again introduced by the English Council, and, either by accident or mere ill-judged purpose, one of these changes was in the tea duties. Although the chests had not yet been emptied into Boston Harbour, the ominous word acted as a trumpet call to patriotism. Here at least there was no uncertainty as to England's real intentions. The familiar scenes were again enacted. Two of the Bills were unanimously rejected. The Viceroy found that it was impossible to stem the torrent. The Duke of Leinster, to recover his credit for opposing the Absentee Tax, would have rested on the negative vote and given no supplies at all. The majority, less extreme in their violence, drew the heads a second time, and sent them over. But, 'soured and inflamed' as the House was, the Viceroy had to warn the Cabinet that if altered again they would certainly again be thrown

out, and would not afterwards pass in any shape whatever.[1]

This was not all. The sour humour had other and juster causes which Harcourt was too ignorant to apprehend. Lord Townshend understood Ireland's case. He recognized her wrongs. He had studied her disorders, and he had thought about them with serious alarm. His letters contain the serious reflections of a high-minded and far-seeing statesman. Harcourt could look no further than the problem of the moment, the immediate measures necessary to rig an adequate majority.

While bringing up for transmission the heads of the new Money Bill the Commons presented a second complaint, which would not have been heard of had the Cabinet listened to Townshend. From the first week of the session committees had been enquiring into the meaning of the torrent of emigration which was still streaming out of Ulster to the American plantations. They had excused and covered the landlords, but England as well as the landlords was to blame. The linen trade had alarmingly decreased. The best artisans were going now because there was no work for them, and one cause at least was the artificial encouragement given to rival English manufactures, and the duties now levied on the coarse kinds of Irish linen fabrics in direct breach of the engagement for which their woollen weaving had been sacrificed.

With a temperate good sense, which shows that the

[1] 'The Earl of Harcourt to Lord Rochford, December 27.'

remonstrance had been drawn by rational men instead of by tempestuous orators, the House of Commons, by the hands of the Speaker, presented their case to the Viceroy.

They had been confined by law to the manufacture of flax and hemp. They had submitted to their condition, and had manufactured those articles to such 1774
good purpose that at one time they had supplied sails for the whole British navy. Their English rivals had now crippled them by laying a disabling duty on their sail-cloths, in the hope of taking the trade out of their hands; but they had injured Ireland without benefiting themselves. The British market was now supplied from Holland, and Germany, and Russia, while to the Empire the result was only the ruin of Ulster and the flight of the Protestant population to America. 'If,' they said in modest irony, 'Great Britain reaped the fruits of this policy, the Commons of Ireland would behold it without repining and submit to it without complaining; but it aggravates the sense of their misfortunes to see the rivals, if not the enemies, of Great Britain in the undisturbed possession of those advantages to which they think themselves entitled on every principle of policy and justice. It is the expectation of being restored to some, if not all, of those rights, and that alone, which can justify to the people the conduct of their representatives in laying additional burdens on them. No time can be more favourable to give effect to their wishes than the present, when the public councils are directed by a Minister who has the

courage to pursue the common interest of the British Empire.' [1]

One more point of difference arose on another serious question. The whole country, the north especially, was still agitated. Taxes, hitherto irregularly paid, were now being collected more resolutely by the help of the increased military force; the soldiers were doing the duty of police, and when work of this kind is done by soldiers it is done always roughly and sometimes unjustly. Ireland had many times petitioned for an extension thither of the Habeas Corpus Act. Many times the heads of such a Bill had been transmitted, but had never been returned. The Habeas Corpus Act 'was held irreconcilable with the idea of a dependency,' and notice had been at last sent to the Irish Council 'to transmit the Bill no more.' [2] Under the pressure of outcries which had risen perhaps out of the Hearts of Steel movement and the measures taken to repress it, the House of Commons made their demand once more, and under the circumstances the Viceroy threw the responsibility of the refusal on England.

On the great Money Bill question the Cabinet had this time to yield. Where feeling ran so strong, a majority was too expensive an article to be purchased, except occasionally. Compliance even with Lord Shannon would not secure support in these exceptional cases. The trade complaints were doggedly dismissed, to add to the pile of wrong which was fast rising to a

[1] *Commons' Journals, Ireland*, December 25, 1773.

[2] 'Lord Harcourt to Lord Rochford, March 6, 1774.'

height when England would be compelled to attend to it. The Habeas Corpus Act was refused, as Harcourt knew it must be, on grounds which throw light on the practical working of the Irish Constitution. It was held 'a solecism in politics to make the constitution of a colony the same as that of the mother country.' 'The Catholics must either be admitted to the protection of it or be excluded.' If they were admitted the peace of the country could not be secured. If they were excluded four-fifths of the people would be deprived of their constitutional rights. A power of suspension must exist somewhere to provide for emergencies. In England that power was in the Parliament. In Ireland, where Parliament met only in alternate years, it must vest in Government; and if the 'innovation' was sanctioned and the Act conceded, the Government would be in continual danger, either of provoking the Catholics by suspending it or of provoking the Protestants by refusing to suspend it.[1]

The Commons acquiesced, but finding their other grievances unheeded, acquiesced with desponding disapproval. The usual thanks were given to the Viceroy at the end of the session, not however without the suggestion of an amendment, which, though it was rejected, expressed the thoughts of the better part of the country.

'But although in compliance with the modern practice of Parliament, and from a veneration of your Excellency's private virtues, which we sincerely respect, we thus address your Excellency at the close of this

[1] 'The Earl of Harcourt to the Earl of Rochford, March 6.' S.P.O.

session, yet we cannot but recollect with the deepest concern that under your Excellency's administration taxes have been imposed on our constituents in this time of profound peace more grievous in their nature, and greater in their extent, than have been required or granted in this country for a century past, merely to support overloaded and, in many parts, unnecessary establishments, and particularly an odious and enormous list of absentee pensions and places; so that this kingdom is now not only incapacitated from contributing to the support of a war, but even debilitated in peace by the impoverishment and consequent emigration of our people. A system of taxes the more intolerable to a free people from the unconstitutional mode of levying them with the assistance of the military power, first attempted and finally effected in this kingdom under your Excellency's administration.' [1]

[1] *Commons' Journals*, June 1, 1774.

SECTION IV.

The student of the Parliamentary records of Ireland still discovers two parties there—a party of noisy, self-called patriots, catching at imaginary wrongs for factious or interested purposes; and a party of reasonable men, in each session unfortunately growing smaller, who understood what was amiss with their country, and were trying in vain to make the Government listen to them. It was not yet too late to arrest the current of disaffection could England have been persuaded to act fairly. Lord North and Lord Harcourt knew that the Absentee Bill ought to have been passed. They could have passed it with ordinary courage. Every English administration was aware of the iniquity of the Pension List. Hardly any single Minister would have defended in private the prostitution of Irish patronage to buy corrupt support in the House of Commons. Could Cabinets have retained their conscience in their collective capacity, and determined resolutely to do what was right in Ireland and nothing else, they would have met even now with few serious difficulties. They might have gone for a year or two without the supplies; but there yet remained in the Parliament a knot of upright men who would have stood by any Government that was acting resolutely on true principles. Lord Townshend would have won his battle without bribery, and his reforms would have

1774

remained, had he been allowed to commence with restoring Free Trade.

The worst effect of a vicious system is the difficulty of leaving it, the difficulty of seeing that it ought to be left. English statesmen were allowing much which they knew to be wrong in Ireland. The worst wrongs of all—the restrictions on industry—had continued so long that their character could no longer be recognized. Both sections in the Parliament were giving trouble—English Cabinets thought unreasonable trouble—and they did not care to look closely at the grounds of complaint. The better sort of men could be silenced only by abolishing commercial abuses and stirring hornets' nests at Bristol and Manchester. It was easier a great deal to lead patriots by the nose by the old methods which had never been known to fail. Not therefore to making crooked things straight, but, as usual, to the better organizing a majority, the labour of the Castle was addressed in the recess.

Hely Hutchinson had continued faithful since Townshend had gained him over, but he was still fed of 'the chameleon's dish.' His wife was not yet ennobled. He himself was Prime Sergeant and Privy Councillor, and had obtained besides a sinecure of 1800*l.* a year, but his sons were unprovided for, and his claims were still waiting for adjustment. Mr. Flood had shown his capacity of being mischievous, but he had let the Viceroy know that he was willing to come to terms. He had supported the Government on the whole during the last session, and Harcourt had been looking out anxiously

for means of providing for him.[1] There were unusual difficulties, for Flood was not at the bar, and the lines of the professions were therefore closed against him. In June 1774 Dr. Andrews, the Provost of Trinity College, died. By statute the office could be held only by an ecclesiastic. But a dispensing power lay in the Crown. The Viceroy saw in the vacancy an opportunity of satisfying one at least of the expectants. From a disinterested desire, as he professed, to help the Viceroy out of his embarrassment with Flood, Hely Hutchinson, who had been himself educated at Trinity, intimated that if he might have the Provostship he would retire from the bar, and would place the offices which he already held at the Viceroy's disposition. He would lose a professional income of nearly 5000*l.* a year, 'but his taste for literature and the possession of a considerable estate in the country disposed him to a sacrifice.' He was Prime Sergeant, and he was Alnager besides,[2] with a salary for doing nothing of 1800*l.* a year. Both these places would be vacated. Lord Shannon might be gratified by making his friend Mr. Dennis Prime Sergeant, Mr. Flood might be Alnager with a thousand a year; the Provost's place being worth but two thousand, Hely Hutchinson might himself reasonably keep the other eight hundred; and his two sons, for whom he had been anxious before, being now

[1] 'Among the many embarrassments of my situation, I have found none more difficult than to make a proper provision for Mr. Flood.'—'Lord Harcourt to Lord Rochford, June 19, 1774.'

[2] An officer whose duty, discharged by deputy, was to measure cloth by the ell, and fix the assize.

boys of sixteen and seventeen, might be appointed to the office of 'Searchers of the Port of Strangford, now vacant, with a salary of a thousand a year.' By this little arrangement the Viceroy would be able to gratify three considerable members of the House of Commons, please Lord Shannon, and greatly strengthen the Administration.[1]

The Viceroy was well contented. He discovered that 'the situation of a university in the metropolis required more experience and knowledge of the world than was to be found in a clergyman.' The parties interested were communicated with, and all were satisfied except one, the person in whose behalf the changes were professedly to be made. Flood could not conceal his indignant disappointment. That he, the first orator in Ireland, who had blazed for ten years as a star of the first magnitude, should be put off with the place of Alnager, shorn too of half its profits, approached to insult. Lord Frederick Campbell had trifled with him. De Blaquiere had promised him, he said, 'the first great office that should be vacant,' and was now trifling with him also. He, too, had set his heart on the Provostship of Trinity. He, not Hutchinson, ought to have it.

Harcourt, to whom he poured out his complaints, pointed out to him that Hutchinson was resigning two important offices in exchange. 'And have I resigned nothing?' whimpered Flood with pretty *naïveté*. 'Have not I made as great or a greater sacrifice, my popularity

[1] 'Lord Harcourt to Lord Rochford, June 19, 1774.'

and reputation, which I have risked in support of a Government that now treats me with contempt?' He flung away in a rage. He would have no more to do with the Castle, he said. His treatment would be a lesson to everybody. But for him Lord Harcourt would have been as badly treated as his predecessors. 'For himself, he was now reduced to a most humiliating and perplexed state, either to become a humble suppliant for favour, or give up all hopes of it, and submit tamely to every species of ridicule and contempt.'

For a politician to sell his services was not contemptible, it appeared; the real disgrace was to sell them and be cheated of the price. The Provostship was a situation for life. The object was to find something for Flood which could be taken away if he fell off, something which would be a security for his good behaviour. 'To have made Mr. Flood Provost of Trinity,' Harcourt said, 'would have placed him in a station of dependence that might have made him extremely troublesome and formidable.' Prudence, however, required that he should not be flung back into opposition. The Viceroy enquired what his own views were. Flood intimated, as a matter of favour, that he would consent to accept a Vice-Treasurership. The three Vice-Treasurerships were sinecure offices with salaries attached to them of 3500*l.* a year. They were reserved in general for special favourites; unfortunately, for persons out of Ireland. Harcourt mildly remonstrated. Mr. Flood might be contented to begin at a lower level. Finding Flood immovable, he consented at last to

recommend him. 'It may be better,' he said, in reporting the conversation, 'to secure Mr. Flood almost at any expense than risk an opposition which may be most dangerous and mischievous.'[1]

Lord North would have been willing, but he had England to care for as well as Ireland. 'My objection,' he replied, 'to Mr. Flood's having a Vice-Treasurership is that I fear much blame *here*, and no small difficulty in carrying on the King's business, if I consent to part with the disposal of these offices, which have been so long and uniformly bestowed on members of the British Parliament. I acknowledge the Irish members had a right to complain when two gentlemen who had no permanent connection with Ireland were appointed Chancellor of the Exchequer and Master of the Rolls for life, but . . . .' In short, Harcourt was not to think of it. The Cabinet had great respect for Mr. Flood, but it could not be done.[2]

As a possible alternative Lord North suggested reviving the old office of President of Munster, with a salary of 2000*l.* a year. Harcourt objected that if the Presidency was made a reality it would give Flood too much consequence; and to revive it as a sinecure would be a job too gross even for Ireland. It would be less objectionable to raise the salary of some insignificant place already subsisting, or to give Flood a handsome pension. Mr. Flood denounced the pension system generally, but would doubtless accept one for himself. A

[1] 'To Lord North, July 8. Most private and confidential.'
[2] 'Lord North to the Earl of Harcourt, July 23.'

provision of one kind or another must be made for him 'on mere grounds of economy.' 'Was it worth while to hazard the stamp and other duties so lately effected, and put an able and active man at the head of a numerous opposition to save a thousand a year for one life, and that perhaps not a good one, besides the other mischief which a desperate and disappointed man might devise?'[1]

After much deliberation, the Cabinet at length consented that Flood should have his Vice-Treasurership; but now a difficulty arose with Flood himself. The Vice-Treasurership was held 'during pleasure.' Flood said he had no doubt of Lord Harcourt's good disposition towards him, but Harcourt could not answer for his successor, who might dismiss him without ceremony from an office of precarious tenure. He had been promised 'the first great employment that should be vacant. He ought to have succeeded to the Provostship or to some situation which would have placed him on an equal footing with the great officers of the Crown.'

The Viceroy said that Flood had himself named the Vice-Treasurership. He had done his best to oblige him, but he would go no further. Flood must accept what was now offered, 'or the Castle would hold itself discharged of its promises."

'When he saw that his arts and his arguments made no impression, he said that out of his consideration for Lord Harcourt he would waive his claims to a more desirable situation.' He would accept a Vice-Trea-

[1] 'To Lord North, September 3.'

surership, provided it involved no charge on Ireland; provided, *i. e.*, his salary was paid from the English Exchequer.

This was too much. The Viceroy said he could not ask Lord North to relieve the Establishment at the expense of Great Britain. The negotiation was suspended. 'Mr. Flood had so high an opinion of his Parliamentary abilities that he thought England must submit to anything.' The vacant office was hung up as a prize for good behaviour to keep the patriots in order for the next year. The Viceroy particularly begged that it might not be given away, 'because it would deprive him of the means of making arrangements that would remove any material difficulty that could arise in the ensuing session of Parliament.'[1]

Months now were allowed to pass, Flood believing that as the time of danger approached nearer the
1775 Viceroy would yield. It would have been a proud position for him could he have told his countrymen that he had compelled England to engage his services without entailing fresh burdens upon them. Finding the Castle gave no sign, he re-opened the correspondence himself, and intimated his willingness to accept. He did not want money, but he was sensitive of ridicule. He had offended his patriot allies by the course which he had already taken. It must not be said of him that he had been duped out of his reward. He consented to take his place when Parliament next opened among the avowed 'servants of the Crown.' He had been so late

[1] 'To Lord North, September 3.'

in agreeing, however, that the session had begun before the King's letter arrived confirming his appointment, and during the first few days he was obliged to be absent from his seat. 'Till the letter arrives, in fact,' Lord Harcourt said; 'his situation is awkward enough. Since I was born I never had to deal with so difficult a man, owing principally to his high-strained ideas of his own influence and popularity.' [1]

As the dispute with America threatened to take a violent form, it was watched in Ireland with increasing eagerness, and when the attempt at coercion was followed by the news of Lexington and Bunker's Hill, domestic differences were suspended in the passionate anxiety with which the evolution of the drama was observed. The question in both countries was substantially the same—whether the Mother Country had a right to utilize her dependencies for her own interests irrespective of their own consent? The wrongs which America had taken arms to redress were trivial compared to the wrongs of Ireland. If America obtained free trade and self-government, the Irish might claim and hope for the same privileges, and the chains once broken in one colony might be broken in all. The Northern Presbyterians looked on the revolt as the revival of the conflict of the preceding century. They were personally interested in a struggle in which so many of their own kindred were engaged; while the Americans, alive to the value of support and sympathy

[1] 'Harcourt to North, October 9, 1775.'

so near at home, had made untiring efforts to enlist Ireland in support of their cause.

The Ireland of which the Americans were thinking, the Ireland which alone as yet had a political existence, was Protestant Ireland. The Catholics might have looked on with indifference, or perhaps with pleasure, at a contest in which their enemies were destroying one another. Of them few or none had as yet sought a Transatlantic home—when they emigrated it was to France, or Austria, or Spain. America was the creation of Nonconformity, and was as yet the chosen home of principles which Catholics held most in abhorrence. To them therefore it mattered little in itself whether England got the better of her colonies or the colonies of England. But the friends of the Americans in Ireland were their own worst foes, who, but for England, would have put the penal laws in force against them. In the last war, in which their sympathies might have naturally been enlisted, part of the Catholic body had made demonstrations of loyalty. The present was a fairer opportunity of earning favour at the Protestants' expense, perhaps emancipation from their chains. The Catholic gentry and clergy came forward with an offer of a subscription, and, when their money was declined, with the earnest desire of 'two million faithful Irish hearts,' to be allowed a chance of showing their devotion to their Sovereign by taking arms in his cause.[1]

[1] The petition of the Catholics in Ireland in 1775 has, I believe, never been published. When I mentioned it in America, I was met by a flat denial that any such petition had been presented. I therefore give this most curious and important document entire.

The offer was not accepted. 'The allegiance of the Papists,' De Blaquiere said, added nothing to the strength of Government in Parliament. The Catholic interest could command neither speech nor vote.[1] Their

---

It is addressed to Sir John de Blaquiere:—

'Sir,—We flatter ourselves that the occasion, the motives, and your goodness will engage you to excuse this trouble. As we are informed that an intended subscription among us, his majesty's affectionate, loyal, and dutiful Roman Catholic subjects of his kingdom of Ireland, to raise a fund among ourselves for encouraging recruits to enlist for H.M.'s service, was not judged necessary by Government, yet being desirous to give every assistance in our power, and to give every proof of our sincere, affectionate, and grateful attachment to the most sacred person and government of the best of kings, and justly abhorring the unnatural rebellion which has lately broken out among some of his American subjects against H.M.'s most sacred person and government, impressed with a deep sense of our duty and allegiance, and feeling ourselves loudly called on by every motive and by every tie that can affect the hearts of good and loyal subjects, we take the liberty to make on this interesting occasion a humble tender of our duty, zeal, and affection to our good and gracious King; and we humbly presume to lay at his feet two millions of loyal, faithful, and affectionate hearts and hands, unarmed indeed, but zealous, ready and desirous to exert themselves strenuously in defence of H.M.'s most sacred person and government against all his enemies, of what denomination soever, in any part of the world where they may be; and to exert in an active manner a loyalty and an obedience which hitherto, though always unanimous and unalterable, from our particular circumstances and situation have been restrained within passive and inactive bounds—a loyalty which we may justly say is, and always was, as the dial to the sun, true though not shone upon. And we take the liberty to request, sir, that you will be so good as to represent to his Excellency our Lord Lieutenant these our dispositions and sentiments, which we well know to be those also of all our fellow Roman Catholic Irish subjects, with an humble request to his Excellency that, if he think proper, he may be so good as to lay them before his majesty.

'Fingall, Trimleston, J. Barnewall, B. Barnewall, &c. &c. 121.'

* Enclosed in a letter from Harcourt to Lord Rochford, September 30, 1775.

[1] 'Sir John Blaquiere to Lord North, October 11, 1775.'

demonstrations, and the gracious reception of them, inflamed rather than soothed the Puritans and Presbyterians; and Harcourt, baffled after all his efforts by the effect of the American successes, looked forward to the session with great uneasiness. The Opposition were acting in concert with the English Whigs. He discovered that they meant to bring the subject of the colonies before Parliament, backed by the entire body of the Northern Protestants.[1] They were gaining strength rapidly, and his best chance was to press the subject to an immediate vote by introducing the subject into the speech. He complimented Ireland from the throne on her good behaviour while America was in rebellion. A friend of the Castle in moving the address invited the Commons to assure the King 'that while his Government was disturbed by a rebellion, of which they heard with abhorrence and felt with indignation, they would themselves be ever ready to show the world their devoted attachment to his sacred person.'[2]

Ponsonby, who recovered his patriotism when the Absentee Rents were no longer in danger, rose immediately to move an amendment. 'The Commons of Ireland, confiding in his majesty's tenderness for his

[1] 'The Presbyterians of the North, who in their hearts are Americans, were gaining strength every day; and, by letters written by designing men, whom I could name, from your side of the water, have been repeatedly pressed to engage Ireland to take an adverse part in the contest, telling them the balance of the cause and the decision of the quarrel was on this side St. George's Channel. The subject would then have been pressed upon me with such advantage as I should have had difficulty in resisting.'—'Lord Harcourt to Lord North, October 11, 1775.'

[2] *Commons' Journals*, 1775.

subjects, and relying on his wisdom for bringing these difficult matters to a happy issue, had been silent hitherto during the agitation of a dispute which could not but deeply affect them. Finding the event not answerable to their wishes, they would be wanting to their own interests and the general welfare if they longer hesitated to express their hopes that a difference might be amicably terminated which they feared could not be ended otherwise.'

A debate followed which lasted till the next evening. The Irish cause was openly identified with the American. Denis Daly said that if America was beaten, 30,000 English swords would impose the Irish taxes. Hussey Burgh, a rising orator, who will be heard of again, said England meant to reduce her dependencies to slavery. Flood luckily for himself was absent. Had he spoken he must have been false either to his principles or to his Castle engagements. The weight of defence was thrown on De Blaquiere, the Viceroy being unable to trust 'the independent persons' whom he had bought, on a question where feeling ran so high. 'Your thread-paper friend,' De Blaquiere told Lord North, 'lost flesh which he could not well spare' in the long protracted fight. It was uncertain to the last how the division would turn, but the first octennial Parliament was drawing near its end. De Blaquiere hinted that an adverse vote might lead to an immediate dissolution; and 'the apprehension of rotten eggs and an approaching election' turned the scale in favour of the Castle. The Viceroy said he 'never was so happy in

his life as when the question was decided;' in the first blush of triumph he flattered himself that 'his victory would give peace to Ireland, carry terror to America and despair to Chatham and the English malcontents.'

The keener-eyed De Blaquiere indulged in no such illusions. 'Judging from the asperity of expression among the Outs and the avaricious coldness and jobbery among the Ins,' he looked for a stormy session, and saw rough water on all sides.

He had reason for his fears. When the Irish Parliament consented to the increase of the army, they exacted a condition that not less than 12,000 men should always be kept in Ireland. The excuse for and motive of the augmentation was the better security of life and property, and a smaller number had been proved to be unequal to the work. Lord North now required 4000 of these troops for service in America. He offered, if Ireland wished it, to send 4000 Hessians to take their place at the cost of England.

Again, the army in America was to receive its supplies from Ireland. To keep the prices of provisions down the Viceroy was told that he must lay an embargo on the Irish ports, and shut off the farmers from other markets. This was a measure of direct spoliation, as the Viceroy acknowledged, yet it was to be imposed by sovereign authority, while he was to apply to Parliament to sanction the removal of the troops. If the removal was to be accompanied with an embargo, the Viceroy 'confessed with shame and concern that there was not one of the confidential servants of the Crown

whom he could trust in such a matter without the risk of having the measure defeated.'[1] A dissolution would not mend matters. Forty Castle seats were threatened. Every loose, unprincipled member was watching to make his bargain when the Government should be in difficulties. Lord Massereene had a brother, Major Skeffington, in the House of Commons, and two nephews. Major Skeffington was a bad officer.[2] Massereene had applied for a colonelcy for him, and had been refused. The three votes were in consequence given against the Government on the American question. After the division Skeffington renewed his request. It was understood that unless it was granted the process would be repeated through the session. With infinite disgust the Government was obliged to yield.

'You must,' wrote De Blaquiere—these details are essential to a comprehension of the working of the Irish legislature—'you must by pension or place sink a sum of not less than 9000*l.* per annum, exclusive of the provision that may be found requisite for rewarding or indemnifying those who are connected by office with the Administration. There are no less than from thirty to forty members that if not assisted cannot secure their re-elections. Many of them hold small employments or pensions of from two to three hundred pounds a year. Their seats in the new Parliament cannot be purchased at less than 2000 guineas. Their past services entitle

[1] 'Lord Harcourt to Lord North, October 17 and 23.'

[2] 'There is an appearance of inactivity in him which certainly ought not to be patronised.'—'To Lord North, October 27.'

them to what they now hold; and an addition of pension or salary, as circumstances may require, is scarce an adequate compensation for the advance and loss of so large a sum. Other gentlemen have had promises made them which must be fulfilled in some way. Let it suffice that for carrying on the public business a charge not less than I have stated is indispensable. I have already been obliged, with my Lord-Lieutenant's leave, to promise additional salaries or pensions to Messrs. Blakeney, Fitzgerald, Tighe, Sandford, Pennefather, O'Brien, Coghlen, Malone, Cane, and Fetherstone, most of whom were wavering in their faith.' [1]

With a horizon overcast and every moment growing darker, De Blaquiere, on the 23rd of November, presented the request for the removal of the troops. The embargo had been declared; the House was sullen. The American question was at once revived. Ponsonby protested. Fitzgibbon (the father) said that if Ireland refused consent the King would reconsider his course. Hussey Burgh said that Ireland ought not to help in cutting the throats of the Americans. If the principle of taxation was established against America there would be an end of Irish liberty. Consent was given, but with extreme reluctance. Hessians or Brunswickers the House flatly refused to admit; and the objection to receive them must have been serious, for Lord North had been attacked at Westminster for having proposed to supply the garrison of Ireland at the cost of the

[1] 'De Blaquiere to Lord North, November 1775.' S. P. O.

British Treasury.[1] Was Ireland safe with her garrison reduced so far? That was a further question of which Lord North and the Viceroy were better able to feel the importance than the House of Commons. There it was believed that when the 4000 men were sent away 8000 at least would remain. Those who were behind the scenes knew, unhappily, that the truth was far otherwise. The King had insisted on better order being observed in these matters. Nothing ever remained in order in Ireland. On the 1st of November the actual number of soldiers there all told amounted but to 9200. The directions given were to pick the best men from all the regiments for the American service. The force that would remain would be a shadow. Under these circumstances Lord North appeared to think that he might as well take all the troops that could go. No sooner had he received notice that the Parliament had consented, than he sent orders to embark eight regiments instead of the six which would have made up the allotted number. Harcourt, who had endured much, replied that if eight regiments were to go, 'he must request his majesty to appoint some other person to execute a command which would be fatal to the kingdom. He described his situation 'as the most cruel and unmerited that ever fell to the share of a man whose life had been devoted to his prince.'[2]

Across this scandalous trifling came a fresh protest

[1] 'Lord North to Lord Harcourt, December 1, 1775.'

[2] 'Lord Harcourt to Lord North, December and January 1775 and 1776.'

on the state of Irish trade. The Speaker before the Christmas recess presented one more remonstrance against the wrongs of the Irish manufacturers.

Will you at last, the Commons said in substance, repent of your misdeeds to us while there is time? We have parted with our garrison at the hazard of our safety. We have granted supplies beyond the limit of our means. May we hope in return that the light will break at length through the cloud which has so long overshadowed us? Will you understand now that the prosperity of Ireland is the strength, and not the weakness, of Ireland?

To have assented even then at the eleventh hour would have been worth more to England than all the majorities which all her wealth could purchase—but it was not to be. The Cabinet could never rise beyond the thought how with least difficulty to meet the trials of the current session. The country might continue to tread her miserable round from year to year, from century to century. They had bought Flood and they were satisfied. Unknown to them there had entered into this very Parliament, in this December, by a casual vacancy in the borough of Charlemont, a youth who had come into notice as a contributor to 'Baratariana,' more dangerous than a thousand Floods, because alone of Irish patriots he was incorruptible. In five years Henry Grattan was to wrest out of England's hands the power which she had so long abused, to give back to his country her birthright of free trade, and to give her with it the fatal privileges of constitutional self govern-

ment, which she wanted honesty to use, and which plunged her into a deeper abyss of ruin than she had escaped. His voice was first heard beside Hussey Burgh's denouncing the iniquity of the embargo. But neither could the embargo be prevented nor any measure passed of real consequence, not even those which England knew to be necessary and had confessed to be desirable.

The first question after the winter recess was the defence of the country. England was at war. Ireland was denuded of troops, the defences of her harbours in ruins, and exposed to the attacks of privateers. In this situation the Parliament offered the national remedy of a militia, and drew the heads of a Bill for transmission. The important thing was to get a force of some kind that could be relied on, and a militia at all events would have been under the control of the Crown. Lord North had no objection, but acting on the old and fatal maxim of 'divide et impera,' he saw in the establishment of a militia an opportunity of gratifying the Catholics and rewarding the display of their loyalty. They were willing to be enrolled; and Lord North stipulated that their enlistment must be accompanied with 'indulgences in the exercise of their religion.' Such indulgences would have followed as a matter of course, had there been no formal demand for them. But the prominent mention of a tender subject at once exasperated Protestant prejudice. Harcourt felt his way, but found that the proposal to admit the Catholics would ruin a measure which was otherwise

1776

urgently desirable. 'There was no point,' he said, 'on which gentlemen were so sensitive, or the country in general so jealous. Nothing more was needed to throw Ireland into a flame.'[1] The heads of the Bill went across as they were first drawn, containing no mention of the Catholics. With an infatuation which brought rapid penalties after it the Bill was not returned, and instead of a militia which would be in the hands of the commander-in-chief, the Government were to reckon with the volunteers.

The same perversity attended the revival of the Judges' Tenure Bill. Ireland was naturally anxious for the removal of the Bench from the influence of jobbery. Townshend had recommended the change from the throne, and in Townshend's time it had been prevented only by the introduction of a clause reserving a power of removal to the British Parliament. The Irish Commons, as a last act before the dissolution, made another attempt to bring it about. The heads of the Judges' Tenure Bill were brought to the Viceroy to be sent over. Lord Harcourt, unwilling in his embarrassment to part with any influence by which he could work on the fears or hopes of the baser members of the Lower House, himself entreated the Cabinet to refuse consent.

'The state of the country duly considered,' he said, I am persuaded it would be very undesirable to make the commission of judges to continue during good behaviour. So many inconveniences would infallibly

[1] 'Lord Harcourt to Lord North, February 28, 1776.'

result from such a bill, that I trust it will not be deemed proper to return it to Ireland.'[1]

These proceedings may be described as a very effective sowing the wind, the more so as the parties concerned were innocently unconscious of what they were doing. On the 5th of April the session closed, and with it the Parliament. 'Our business ended,' De Blaquiere reported, 'with temper and satisfaction. We had a sharp debate on the address. Mr. Grattan, Mr. Bushe, and Mr. Yelverton were particularly violent; but we shamed them even in argument, and in point of numbers were so strong that they dared not divide.'[2]

It would be curious to know what the 'arguments' were. A case could be made on the Money Bill, on Irish rights, and the American war; but the attack turned largely on the defences of the country, the increasing debt, the corrupt expenditure, the monstrous Pension List, and the loading the establishment with sinecures as the price of political support. On these points what answers could have been made which were not lies?

Harcourt's term of office was now running out. One duty only remained to him—to superintend the general election; to see the new Parliament installed, and its composition tested by the election of a Speaker. It

[1] 'Lord Harcourt to Lord Weymouth, February 5, 1776.' The Harcourt correspondence in the State Paper Office is preserved in copies made and annotated by Sir John Blaquiere. To the present production of his chief he appends as a remark: I was in the country when this extraordinary letter was written. J. B.'

[2] 'To Lord North, April 7.'

was then to be prorogued for fifteen months. The Viceroy was to go to England. His successor was not yet determined on. He might himself, perhaps, be asked to return, and if Lord North so wished it he was ready to sacrifice himself, or, as he put it, 'he was not disposed to turn his face from the evil, or suffer the bitter cup to pass from his lips.'

De Blaquiere had already explained the steps which the election rendered necessary. The estimate fell far short of the requirements. Eighteen members of the Lower House insisted that they had earned peerages. If they received their coronets, they undertook to fill the seats which they had vacated with men on whom the Castle might rely. But they refused to be paid in promises. They must have their price on the spot. Besides these, de Blaquiere recommended a long list of persons for pensions and places. He represented compliance as 'indispensable for the public service.' And here again delay was unpermitted, for, as he observed, 'Many of our grants are always mortgaged in part for the purchase money of our seats.'[1] 'I have but three words for you,' he wrote in a companion note to Secretary Robinson—'Dispatch, dispatch, dispatch, for the existence of your future views depends upon it.'

Under these influences the memorable Parliament was chosen which was to revolutionise the Irish Constitution. Little could its future career have been conjectured from its first performance. It assembled in force to choose its Speaker. Pery, as before, was the

[1] 'Sir John Blaquiere to Lord North, May 4.'

government candidate. Ponsonby was again the choice of the patriots. It appeared, when the trial came, that Lord Shannon and the Elies had again fallen off. The Duke of Leinster had forgotten the old feud, and supported Ponsonby with all his weight. But corruption for the present proved too strong for aristocracy and patriotism combined. Pery was elected by 141 votes to 98, and the Castle won a glorious victory in its own imagination.

Public confidence, which had been shaken, was restored. Government debentures rose from 90 to 101. Lord Harcourt not being required to drink any deeper of his 'bitter cup,' resigned with an aureole about his head, and returned to England, to fall into the Nuneham well. De Blaquiere, who resigned with him, preferred to remain in a country where his composure under fire had made him popular, and where he conceived that by his political dexterity he had fixed the authority of Government on a basis of rock.

'In retiring from my public station in this kingdom,' he wrote to Lord North, 'permit me most sincerely to congratulate your Lordship on the unshaken loyalty and perfect tranquillity that have been preserved in it at a period when so much pains had been taken to lessen the one and disturb the other. I mention the situation of this kingdom with so much confidence and pleasure because there is not a part of his majesty's dominions where I would be so happy to spend the remainder of a private life as in Ireland.'[1]

[1] 'Sir John Blaquiere to Lord North, July 4, 1776.'

BOOK VI.

CHAPTER I.

THE BEGINNINGS OF RETRIBUTION.

SECTION I.

NINETY YEARS had passed since Aghrim and the surrender of Limerick had laid the Irish race once more prostrate at the feet of England. The time had come, as it comes with all nations and with all men, when England was to be called to account for the trust which had been committed to her. She had sown with poison weeds the draggled island which lay in the rear of her imperial domain. The crop had sprung up and ripened, and now the harvest was to be gathered. When circumstances compel a strong nation to deprive a neighbour of political independence, that nation is bound to confer on the inferior country the only reparation in its power—to share with it to the utmost its own material advantages—to justify its assumption of superiority by the equity and wisdom of its administration. England had discharged her sovereign duties to Ireland by leaving her to anarchy masked behind a caricature of the forms of her own constitution. With

1776

an insolent mockery she had refused her request for incorporation in the empire. She had left her the name of a separate kingdom and a separate nationality as her excuse for withholding from her the equal rights to which she was entitled. The nationality which she insisted on preserving was to become a thorn in England's side—the instrument of a merited humiliation.

The Protestant colonists implanted as her representatives by James and Cromwell, finding that transportation to Ireland implied the sacrifice of their rights as English citizens, became Irish in sentiment, and trod again, step for step, the same road which had been travelled by the Norman conquerors. They adopted Irish habits; they adopted the Irish animosity against their oppressors. In the collapse of nobler purpose they had come to regard their position as an opportunity for plunder, and to consider the proceeds of the soil, whether in the shape of public revenue or private rent, as so much booty to be seized and divided.

In the misappropriation of the revenue England herself set the ignoble example. The Irish Parliament became simply the arena for the partition of the spoil. The English Cabinet retained the Pension List for corruption or for questionable court favourites. They retained the high offices of State as sinecures, to keep in good humour their Parliamentary friends at home. As the price of connivance, they left to the Irish leaders all else that could be collected as cess or tax to be absorbed by themselves, or to be disposed of among their dependents or kinsmen. Public interests mean-

while went to ruin. The army was neglected, the police was unexistent. Smugglers, houghers, Whiteboys, and women ravishers pursued their calling unmolested, till familiarity with their atrocities raised them into the rank of national institutions. The harbour defences crumbled and disappeared, the military stores were stolen. From Dublin Castle to the lowest custom-house the public service was pervaded with peculation, the Viceroys themselves playing the first part in the disgraceful spectacle—superior, doubtless, themselves to unworthy influences, but setting the example of buying the consciences of those who were nearest to them.

The least evil of bad government is the immediate consequence. The curse of it is the effect upon the characters of the people who grow to manhood in so detestable an atmosphere.

The attempts of George the Third to introduce reform had only shown the hopelessness of the problem. Townshend and Harcourt had broken the power of the great nobles, but they had broken it only by more indiscriminate and lavish bribery. They had taught the so-called independent members that the service of the Castle was a safer road to fortune than the service of the Leinsters and Ponsonbies. The discovery once made, the hunger grew by what it fed on, till corruption became a thing of course, and honour and principle were words which ceased to have a meaning, except in rounding the periods of some fluent orator who laughed at them in his sleeve.

In their social relations the Irish gentry were

scarcely more satisfactory than in politics. Ownership of soil had descended from a time when the lordship of a manor was a military command. Services due to the Crown, both in England and Ireland, had long been compounded for; and the distinction between real and personal property, so far as positive duty was supposed to attach to one rather than the other, was fast disappearing. In England the spirit of the old form survived the letter of it. The great families remained objects of affectionate allegiance to the tenantry. They administered justice; they officered the army and militia; they commanded the yeomanry; they represented the counties, and in that capacity had been the guardians of public liberty. Placed by station and fortune beyond vulgar temptation, they held in check the adventurers who took up politics as a road to personal preferment, and by the genuine integrity and patriotism which they have carried into modern Parliaments they have alone made possible the wholesome working of the Constitution. In Ireland the form was the same; the reality was essentially different. Of the resident noblemen and gentlemen a minority retained their English character, and acted, so far as circumstances would allow them, on English principles. To them was due such progress as Ireland had made. Their estates became oases in the general wilderness, and they and their families were regarded by the peasantry with a feeling which went beyond allegiance—the passionate attachment with which the Celt never fails to reward the masters who treat him with kindness and justice. But

men like these kept clear of public life, or if they entered it can be traced only by ineffectual efforts to stem the general tide. At best they were but a handful of salt, to keep the mess from putrefying, and were never in sufficient numbers to influence materially the fortunes of the country. A third, at one time half, of the Protestant owners of land in Ireland were absentees. Their connection with their properties was the mercantile one merely. Their duties were to send persons to collect their rents. Their lands were leased to head tenants, whom the law compelled to call themselves Protestants also; but these persons were often of the old blood, ashamed of the names they bore, and, being without religion of any kind, were without moral sense. The idea of duty having disappeared, the idea which took its place was the desirableness of being an idle gentleman. To live without labour, to spend his time in hunting, shooting, drinking, gambling, and fighting duels, became the supreme object of an Irishman's ambition. The head tenant let to others like himself, and they again to others, till the division fell at length below the line at which Catholics were excluded from holding farms. The Catholics would offer any rent, and thus gradually ousted such Protestant cultivators as had remained from earlier times. Over large tracts of the southern provinces the only Protestants were the agents of the gentry, or else tenants holding on lives and long leases. The cultivation fell exclusively to the Catholic peasantry, to wretched cottiers, themselves starving on potatoes, who in those above them saw nothing but a

series of profligate extortioners, a reproach alike to the creed they professed and to the system of administration which they represented.

The extremity of worthlessness was to be found on the estates of the absentees. Of the resident proprietors, the smaller sorts, living most of them beyond their means, and buried in mortgages, nearly resembled the middleman. The more considerable, with a few remarkable exceptions, formed the Irish gentlemen of popular tradition, who, easy and good-natured, had accommodated themselves, like the Norman barons, to the ways of their country. They, too, raced and rode and drank. They were out at elbows. They were popular among their tenants, and on the whole, kind to them. But it was the more necessary for them to find other means of replenishing their empty purses. In a land where industry was under a blight, they took up into themselves the genius of the nationality which their fathers had been planted in Ireland to eradicate. Light-hearted, reckless, and extravagant, they became like Irish chiefs of the sixteenth century in modern costume, living from hand to mouth, and recognizing but one obligation which was always and uniformly held sacred among them —to send or accept a challenge, with or without reason, at any place and at any time. These, for the most part, were the country magistrates, to whom the peace of Ireland was entrusted. The duties were light, for the crimes committed were of a sort which, till landlords began themselves to be murdered, opinion did not severely condemn; and those inclined to be more severe

found themselves compelled to conform to the general tone. As a rule, the difficulty of obtaining evidence was a sufficient passive check. If a too enterprising magistrate went further, if he insisted on punishing a ravisher, or preventing a duel, or arresting smugglers or whiskey distillers, or interfering in short with any general right which custom sanctioned, he was encountered by a challenge to himself from one or other of the parties aggrieved, and he had to fight, or lie under the ban of society.

More unsuited than even the owners of the land for the work demanded of them, were the spiritual instructors which the Irish Constitution provided. That the Irish Celts might be converted to Protestantism could not be called impossible after the example of Wales and the Scotch Highlands. That they should be so converted was of incomparably more consequence, because it was only when ceasing to be Catholics that it was possible for them to become loyal subjects of the British Crown. British Ministers dreamt of attaching them by standing between the priests and the execution of the penal laws. The priests affected gratitude, which they did not and could not feel. The Irishman, who was at once Celt and Catholic, inherited a legacy of bitterness from the past which he was forbidden to forget. The invaders were in possession of the land of his fathers. He had been stripped of his home for his fidelity to his creed. He saw himself trodden down into serfdom on the soil which had been his own, and England—England only—he knew to be the cause of

his sorrows. The edge of his animosity was blunted when he adopted the reformed religion. The rebellions which had occasioned the forfeiture were then no longer sacred to him, and his point of sympathy with the conquerors was stronger than his resentment. To gain him over therefore should have been the first object of an English statesman, and the institutions of the country should have been studiously adapted to missionary purposes. No organization could have been invented, less adapted for such an end, than the Established communion. It had divided Protestantism in two, and had ostracized the most energetic section of it. It drove the Presbyterians into republicanism and disaffection; and to the Catholic, who boasted of his own unchanging and uniform faith, it presented the contrast of wrangling creeds hating and denouncing each other more cordially than either hated their common antagonist.

The Irish Church, had it not been for English influence, would probably have drifted into a wiser policy and perhaps a more successful career. At the beginning of the last century the bishops and clergy were Jacobites and High Churchmen, and were disabled for active work of any kind by worldliness and pluralities. The pluralities and worldliness continued, but the happy possessors of the richer benefices became absentees like the landlords. The work was left to curates of simpler habits and more genuine piety. The visit of Wesley to Ireland and the practical conflict with Romanism of a violent type, had kindled and fostered in the parochial clergy an interesting development of evangelical devo-

tion; and had they been left to themselves to choose their own prelates and organize their own services, they would have found means perhaps of ending the schism which was paralyzing Protestant efficiency. Here too, however, as everywhere else, the Parliamentary system made improvement impossible. The high offices in the Church, the bishoprics and deaneries, were utilized as the most effective instruments of political influence, and were reserved and distributed with scarcely an exception as the reward or inducement of party service. The celebrated passage in which Swift describes the nominees to the Irish sees as waylaid and murdered by highwaymen on Hounslow Heath, who stole their letters patent, came to Dublin, and were consecrated in their place, is scarcely an exaggeration of the material out of which Ireland in the last century was provided with a spiritual hierarchy. When men like Stone were Primates, and men like Harvey suffragans, the prelates of the Irish Establishment were perhaps more singular specimens of successors of the Apostles than Christendom under its various phases had ever witnessed or will witness again.

The English Government might count itself innocent, and doubtless was content so to regard its own conduct. If Irish landlords chose to neglect their obligations and their properties, if the Parliament was corrupt and could be kept in working condition only by the prostitution of the secular and spiritual patronage; if all classes preferred their own customs to the ordinary principles of order and morality, they were themselves the cause of their own miseries. They had the same

institutions under which England was the envy of the world. If they misused their advantages, on them lay the responsibility. The excuse falls in but too completely with the modern theories of liberty. It is identical with the defence presented long ago by Adam's eldest son, and, as in that first instance, was a cynical pretext to cover deliberate wickedness. If Ireland had fallen into sloth, England had first annihilated the most flourishing branch of her industry. She had left her the linen trade, and boasted of having given her exceptional advantages in the prosecution of it, but she was repenting of her magnanimity, invading the compact, and by side measures, stealing it from her in favour of her own people. She had cut Ireland off from the sea by her Navigation Laws, and had forced her into a contraband trade which enlisted half her population in organized resistance to the law. Even her wretched agriculture had been discouraged, lest an increasing breadth of corn in Cork and Tipperary should lower the value of English land. Her salt meat and butter were laid under an embargo when England went to war, that the English fleets and armies might be victualled cheaply at the expense of Irish farmers. If the high persons at the head of the great British empire had deliberately considered by what means they could condemn Ireland to remain the scandal of their rule, they could have chosen no measures better suited to their end than those which they had pursued unrelentingly through three quarters of a century. By definite acts of unjust legislation they were forcing the

entire people to abandon themselves to the potato, and to sit down to brood over their wrongs in a paralysis of rage and despair.

Things had come to a point when if men had held their peace the very stones would have cried out. Legislatures may pass laws at their high pleasure, but if the laws are not in harmony with the order of nature, nature will refuse to recognize them. The discontent of the peasantry might have been kept down by force; the oratory of the patriots could have been bought over; but every sound and honourable mind in Ireland was now convinced of the necessity of a change. The Americans were pointing the way to redress, setting the example of resistance, and creating an opportunity. A great occasion raises common men to a level above their own. Accident, or the circumstances of the country, had created in Ireland at this time a knot of gentlemen whose abilities and whose character would anywhere have marked them for distinction. Indignation and hope had induced them to forego the temptations which under ordinary conditions would have carried them away to England. They remained at home to fight the battle of their country, to inflict on England a well-merited humiliation, and to try the experiment whether Ireland could or could not be safely trusted with the control of her own destinies.

SECTION II.

THE fortunes of Ireland at this moment were connected so intimately with the phases of war in America, that the student of the Irish revolution must keep himself reminded of the parallel events of the Transatlantic struggle. 1776

After the battle of Bunker's Hill the American lines were drawn closer round Boston. The opening of the year 1776 found General Washington established on Dorchester Heights, from which his cannon commanded the anchorage. Swarms of small privateers from the mouths of the New England rivers intercepted the provision ships coming in from the sea, and in March General Howe found it necessary to evacuate the city, and to remove his troops to some position where they could act with effect and be no longer straitened for supplies. Sir Peter Parker was foiled in the summer in an attack on Charleston; and encouraged by these signal successes, the representatives of the united colonies ventured their Declaration of Independence. Initial misfortunes hardened the spirit and roused the resolution of England. An attempt to enlist Canada in the revolt was a disastrous failure. Colonel Montgomery, who commanded the invading forces, was killed; his army which expected to be welcomed with enthusiasm was cut in pieces by the colonists and the British garrison at Quebec; and an American squadron

on Lake Champlain was taken or destroyed. Lord Howe came out with large reinforcements to the Bay of New York, where he was joined by his brother Sir William and by the troops withdrawn from Boston. Lord Howe had brought with him power to negotiate, and it is possible that if substantial concessions had been offered after the disappointment in Canada, the Declaration of Independence might have been reconsidered. The idea of separation was as yet unfamiliar, and the majority of the colonists were as loyal to the empire generally as they were tenacious of their liberties, and determined to assert them. Lord Howe, however, contented himself with offering pardon to those who would lay down their arms. General Washington held Long Island and the Island of New York itself with 17,000 men. The British Generals intended if possible to take New York and use it from thenceforward as the base of their operations. Sir William Howe landed on Long Island, a little to the North of Sandy Hook. He advanced along the harbour to Brooklyn, opposite the city, and on the 29th of August, on the ground where Brooklyn Park and Cemetery now stand, he encountered Washington, defeated him, drove him across into New York, and out of New York over the Hudson, and thence in the month following forced him back over the Delaware into the forest, apparently broken into ruin.

August 29

Now still more would have been the time for Lord Howe to produce his commission to treat. But careless through the ease of their success the

1777

English forgot Lexington and Bunker's Hill. They regarded their work as done. They broke into separate divisions. They were surprised in detail at Princeton and Trenton, and severely punished. Sir William Howe gathered his broken detachments together, retreated slowly through New Jersey to New York, manœuvring in vain to draw Washington into another general action, and the season being over, settled in his winter quarters to lay his plans for a decisive campaign in the coming spring. New England was the heart of the insurrection. As soon as the snow had gone and roads and rivers were again open, General Burgoyne was to move south from Canada by Lake Champlain, cross the watershed, and descend the Hudson to Albany, where Sir Henry Clinton would meet him ascending the same river from New York. The New England States would thus be cut off from their allies, and tamed perhaps into a separate peace. Meanwhile Howe himself, whom the fleet enabled to select his own point of landing, could threaten Pennsylvania, and if he failed to reduce it could at least prevent Washington from operating against Burgoyne. Sir William Howe conducted his own share of the campaign with perfect success; he landed at the mouth of the Chesapeake, inflicted a destructive defeat on the Americans on the Brandywine, broke them again as fast as they recombined, finally drove the Congress out of Philadelphia, destroyed the forts which had been raised by Washington to prevent the entrance of the English ships into the Delaware, and sate down in the autumn with his

fleet and army in full possession of the American capital.

Far different was the fate of Burgoyne, whose task, to all appearance, was the easier of the two.

Leaving Sir Guy Carleton in Canada with a force adequate for its defence, Burgoyne set out in the middle of June, with ten thousand of the best soldiers with which England could furnish him, a powerful train of field artillery, and a flying swarm of Indian allies, the warriors of the Six Nations who, useless for purposes of real fighting, it was hoped would terrify the American imagination, and instead of terror produced only resentment by their cruelties, and a censure on their employment from the conscience of civilized mankind. He advanced unresisted as far as the head of Lake Champlain. The Americans had a fort at Ticonderoga, but they at once evacuated it on his appearance, and still without seeing an enemy, Burgoyne struck into the forest to make his way to Fort Edward, on the Hudson. Here his difficulties began. Roads there were few or none. The settlers driven to fury by the savages took their rifles and hung upon his skirts, interrupting his communications and cutting off his foraging parties. They closed in between him and Lake Champlain, and stopped his supplies from the rear. The country was swept clean in his front. He found himself dependent entirely on the stores which he carried with him, and was obliged to push forward at the utmost speed. The utmost speed was very small. It was enough for the Americans if they could impede his march. Hunger

would then do their work for them. On the 30th of June Burgoyne had left Lake Champlain. In the middle of September he was still fifty miles from Albany, hemmed in, with provisions failing and unable to move. On the 19th he was attacked by the Americans, and fought a severe battle without being able to extricate himself. Clinton, whom he contrived to inform of his situation, came forward up the river; but instead of pushing on through Albany contented himself with destroying villages and farmhouses in the expectation that he would draw the Americans off. They understood their advantage too well to lose it. They could rebuild their houses. They might wait long before they could catch in a net another English army. As October opened, Burgoyne made one more desperate plunge, and struggled a few miles further to Saratoga. There another battle followed, when he lost several of his guns. The Indians deserted him. His provisions gave out. He attempted to retreat, but it was too late. Half his force was sick or disabled, and on the 12th of October, with no alternative before him but destruction, he was compelled to lay down his arms. October 12

The impression produced by this catastrophe was of greater consequence by far than the material loss. It raised the Americans to the rank of a belligerent power, to be admired and recognized by the world. It decided France to revenge herself for the loss of her Transatlantic provinces by assisting, since she could not keep them for herself, in tearing them from her rival.

Franklin, to whom England would not listen, repaired to Paris, where he was received with open arms. Then, at last, when the opportunity was gone, Lord North began to realize the magnitude of his task. Stunned by the surrender at Saratoga and finding his old enemy preparing to strike in, he recognized the necessity of a compromise, and a bill was hurried through Parliament, which six months previously the States would have accepted with gratitude. The pretension to tax the colonies directly or indirectly was totally and for ever abandoned, and Lord Carlisle and Mr. Eden were sent out as commissioners, with power to offer free trade, to offer seats in the English House of Commons, if America wished to be represented there, and to offer, in the name of England, to bear part of the debt which the colonists had incurred in maintaining their rights by arms. It was too late. Anticipating the course
1778 which England would pursue, France, in consenting to an alliance with the States, had made it a condition that they would for ever renounce their connection with the mother country. La Fayette, who had joined the American army as a volunteer, when the news arrived that the treaty was signed, had flung himself in tears into Washington's arms. Before Lord Carlisle landed the chances of reunion were gone unless it could be achieved by force of arms. Congress replied to the English emissary that if Great Britain desired to negotiate with America, she must withdraw her fleets and armies and recognize American Independence. Very gallantly England accepted the new conditions of

the conflict. She declared war against France. Spain, in the hope of recovering Gibraltar and Jamaica, flung herself into the quarrel and made a third enemy. The little island, stripping herself in earnest now for the large task which lay before her, prepared to encounter single-handed the two strongest powers in Europe, and still keep her hold on her revolted provinces. It was work for a giant, and never before in her history did England bear herself with finer spirit. A French squadron, under Count d'Estaing, appeared at the mouth of the Delaware. Howe moved[1] from Philadelphia and fell back to New York. But the English fleet, thus reinforced from home, came out and drove d'Estaing into Boston, where he was left imprisoned. At the outset the French brought no help to their allies, but only misfortune. Together they attempted Rhode Island, but made nothing of it. A British force was landed in Georgia, defeated the American army there, and recovered the State. The summer following, 1779, an expeditionary force from New York laid waste Virginia. Re-embarking and going north it attacked Connecticut, taking and plundering New Haven and Fairfield. An American fleet was destroyed in August off Massachusetts. Savannah was taken in the south, and a desperate attempt to recover it decisively failed.

1779

It seemed as if England, hitherto, had been playing with her work, and was only now setting to it in earnest. The next year, 1780, brought the

1780

[1] July, 1778.

Americans no better fortune. Sir Henry Clinton made a second attack on Charleston and this time successfully. Charleston surrendered, and five thousand of the soldiers of independence whom Washington could ill spare became prisoners of war. General Gates hastened with the heroes of Saratoga to the defence of Carolina. Lord Cornwallis met him at Camden, and the sharpest battle hitherto fought in the war, ended in a route of the Americans. Gates lost his stores and his guns. Cornwallis, master of the field, was master of the Southern States, and proceeded to confiscate estates, try and punish leading insurgents, and inflict on the Carolinas the sharpest consequences of unsuccessful rebellion. So far as appearances could promise, England was only threatened by another European coalition that she might play over again as proud a part as she had played under Chatham.

Bearing with him this general outline of the events of the American War, the reader will now be prepared to understand what was happening to Ireland.

SECTION III.

Could Lord North have foreseen the problem which was about to be presented to him, he would have chosen the ablest statesman to succeed Lord Harcourt whom he could have persuaded into undertaking a post so detested as the Viceroyalty of Ireland. Encouraged, perhaps, by the apparent docility of the newly-elected Parliament he fixed on the Earl of Buckinghamshire, a nobleman whose qualifications were that he had discharged without discredit the office of minister at St. Petersburgh. Lord Buckinghamshire on entering on his office was encountered at once by a phenomenon at once novel and disagreeable. The embargo had given a fresh impulse to the smuggling trade. Armed sloops and brigantines were again fitted out in the creeks of Cork and Kerry, which at sea and in unquiet times were not particularly scrupulous, while by the side of them and in intimate correspondence with them there appeared on the coast three fast-sailing and heavily-armed privateers carrying American colours, come over to spend the summer in and about St. George's Channel, the 'Lexington' and the 'Reprisal,' eighteen-gun sloops, and the 'Dolphin,' a ten-gun brig. Their crews were mixed, Americans, French, with a large admixture of Irish. They lay chiefly between Holyhead and the Irish Coast, in the track of the

1777

Liverpool and Belfast traders. Their prizes as fast as they took them they sent away round the Land's End, to some French port, where they were sold. The prize crews it was easy to recruit from the smugglers and fishermen. Three ships of the line were sent from Portsmouth to destroy or drive off these mischievous hornets. The 'Arethusa,' a thirty-two-gun frigate, was ordered to find and capture them. They laughed at the liners. They evaded the 'Arethusa.' A fourth brigantine, the 'Oliver Cromwell,' was added to their number in the course of the summer, and they plied their trade with impunity, the smugglers keeping them furnished with fresh provisions, with pilots, and with information. The naval supremacy of England, in reliance on which the Irish harbours were left undefended and Ireland was left bare of troops, was defied at her own doors, while the American flag was seen daily fluttering in insolence from the Irish coast anywhere between Londonderry and Cork.[1]

The Biennial Session came duly round in the autumn. The speech was colourless; the address was unopposed. The political air was tranquil, for all parties were standing at gaze waiting for news from America. It was known that Howe had driven the Congress from Philadelphia. Had it fared equally well with Burgoyne, the majority so carefully secured by Harcourt would have remained true to the winning colours. But in December came the account that Burgoyne was

[1] See the Irish State Papers, for the spring and summer of 1777.

taken, and then that Franklin was in Paris and that a treaty was signed between the insurgent States and France. The next thing that Ireland heard was that Lord Carlisle was going over to grant America more than Ireland had ever asked or dreamt of. This was to be the reward of rebellion. America had taken arms. Ireland had sat passive under her wrongs. America was to be free and triumphant; Ireland was to wear her chains as the symbol of her loyalty.

It was more than Irish blood could bear. Grattan, taking at once his natural place, became the voice of his people. On the 7th of February he moved an address to the Crown that the condition of Ireland was no longer endurable. The military establishment was more costly than ever, yet the country was undefended. The Civil List had grown like a rank weed. Sinecures were heaped on sinecures. The Pension List was so heavy in 1757 that the Commons had protested against it; since that time it had doubled. The representatives of the people must speak out. Mr. Grattan did not prescribe the particular mode of redress, but he demanded a change of system and appealed to the King. 1778

The motion was lost by a heavy majority,[1] but the debate was long and fierce. The supporters of the Government expressed their hope to the Viceroy after the division that the privileges which were to be granted to the rebellious Americans would be extended to a country which had borne its wrongs without resistance,

[1] 143 to 66.

and that the restrictions on Irish trade would be relaxed or abolished.[1]

The Catholics had been demonstratively loyal at the outbreak of the rebellion. They had been rewarded with gracious words, and they too had come to think that they might receive something more substantial. In March, Mr. Talbot, on behalf of the Catholic Committee, presented the Viceroy with a list of grievances, the redress of which, if it satisfied the Committee's expectation, would amount 'to a repeal of almost the whole of the Penal Laws.'[2]

Concession was the order of the day. The King had already resolved on doing something for the Catholics, and the rising tone in the Protestant House of Commons made the Government more anxious to strengthen themselves with the support of their rivals. Lord Buckinghamshire was directed to feel his way among the members of both Houses best inclined to the Catholics, and discover what degree of relief could be proposed with a chance of success. He met with a cold reception. 'The unanimous opinion' was that although a relaxation of the Penal Laws was desirable, 'the time was unfavourable,' and that to bring it forward at present 'would set the country in a flame.'[3]

The Catholic Committee was satisfied to wait, but Mr. Talbot left a sketch of their views with the Vice-

[1] 'The Earl of Buckinghamshire to Lord Weymouth, February 7. To Lord North, March 20, 1778.'

[2] 'To Lord Weymouth, March 4.'

[3] Ibid.

roy. The preamble of it contained as an objection to the continuance of the Penal Laws the singular remark 'that those laws had rather tended to create an aversion from and dislike to the Established Church, and thereby in a great measure prevented a great majority of the people from embracing the Protestant religion.' It paid a compliment equally noticeable to Protestantism itself, by appealing 'to the doctrine and principles of the Reformation, and to the spirit of British laws against oppression or persecution on account of religious belief.' The substance of the Catholic demands was, 'that no person who had taken the oath of allegiance in its latest form should be counted a Papist according to the meaning of the Popery Acts.' [1] 1778

'Divide et impera' was still Lord North's maxim. He hoped by humouring the Catholics to escape a struggle on the trade monopolies. But the art of governing by these time-honoured methods was ceasing to answer its end. War had been declared against France, and the privateers of the past summer might now be supplemented by a fleet from Brest. The coast towns could no longer be left without garrisons.

Parliament voted 300,000*l.* for the repairs of the fortresses. The country professed its willingness to provide for its own defence either by volunteer corps or by a militia. The Presbyterians especially, who had been hitherto devotedly American, were forward in offering their services.[2] The idea of volunteers had not

[1] 'The Earl of Buckinghamshire to Lord Weymouth, March 4, 1778.'

[2] 'The idea of the French war has not only altered the language

yet, perhaps, suggested itself with any sinister object. It was mentioned only as an alternative. The Militia Bill of the last session which had been rejected in England in the interest of the Catholics was again sent over, and the Viceroy begged that it might this time be returned to him, that if necessary the militia might be embodied. The Parliament, however, he said, preferred volunteer corps, and for himself he was strongly of the same opinion. The cost of the militia would fall on the Treasury. If the lords and gentlemen of Ireland were willing to raise independent companies at their expense, it would be a pity to reject their liberality. The Treasury was empty. Twenty thousand pounds had been borrowed at interest from La Touche's bank, but that was already spent. There were pressing demands for money for indispensable purposes, and a second application to Messrs. La Touche had been met by polite excuses.[1]

The necessity of prompt resolution was made more apparent by news which came in from the north. In the last year the privateers had not appeared before June. They had vanished at the equinox, and if they returned they were not looked for at an earlier part of the season. The 'Arethusa' and her consort had gone back to Portsmouth. The 'Drake,' a 20-gun brig or brigantine, lay at Carrickfergus, and is the only vessel mentioned as on the station. A seaman, meanwhile,

but the disposition of the Presbyterians.—The Earl of Buckinghamshire to Lord Weymouth, March 29.'

[1] 'To Lord North, April 30, 1778.'

had entered the service of Congress who knew how to use an opportunity.

Paul Jones was born at Kirkcudbright, in the year 1747, and was the son of a servant of Mr. Craik, of Arbigland. He was apprenticed when twelve years old to a merchant at Whitehaven, and after remaining with him fourteen years emigrated to Virginia. There he found himself at the breaking out of the revolutionary war, and taking the American side he distinguished himself so brilliantly in command of a privateer, that in the spring of 1778 he was appointed to the 'Ranger,' a fast 18-gun sloop, with a roving commission. Guessing that if he was early in the Irish waters he would find the coast clear, he sailed for St. George's Channel at the beginning of April. Every harbour was familiar to him, and the condition of every harbour battery. At midnight on the 20th of April an unknown armed vessel sailed into Carrickfergus Harbour, and brought up under the 'Drake's' side. She had meant to board, but she swung astern too far in the tide. The 'Drake' hailed her to know what she was and whence she came. A voice answered hastily that she was from St. Vincent's. A moment after she had cut her cable and was standing again out to sea. The 'Drake' fired a shot and stood out in pursuit, but she had lost time in getting under weigh, and the mysterious stranger had disappeared in the darkness. It was the 'Ranger,' which had crossed the Atlantic in less than twenty days, and had already in the way up Channel taken a Waterford brig, a Dublin ship called the 'Lord Chatham,' and a sloop and

schooner which she had pillaged and sunk. Having missed the 'Drake,' Jones stood across to Whitehaven to visit his old acquaintances there. His appearance was an absolute surprise. Before the inhabitants had recovered from their astonishment he had landed a couple of boats' crews, spiked the guns in the batteries, fired the shipping in the harbour, and was gone like a sky-rocket.

Swiftness in such matters was the condition of success. On the morning of the 22nd Paul Jones was in Kirkcudbright Bay, the scene of his childhood; he landed at St. Mary's Isle and plundered the house of Lord Selkirk. Thence on the instant he flew back to the Irish coast to look for his friend the 'Drake,' and dispose of her while she was still alone. The 'Drake' was at her old moorings in the Lough. Jones entered again this time in broad daylight at eight in the morning, sailed round her, and went out again. An English officer could not refuse so insolent a challenge. The 'Drake's' guns were four-pounders, the 'Ranger's' were sixes. Captain Burder, the 'Drake's' commander, nevertheless instantly weighed and went in pursuit. The 'Ranger' led him a long chase. He did not overtake her till the evening. After an hour's sharp engagement, yard-arm to yard-arm, Captain Burder and his first officer were killed, half the crew were dead or disabled, and the 'Drake' herself with shattered spars and leaking sides was obliged to strike. Another ship from Whitehaven captured the next morning completed the work of a single week, and the bold privateer, after

landing his least valuable prisoners on the Antrim coast, made sail for Brest with his prizes.[1]

The dullest pedant in the English Government could no longer resist such a rude awakening. Already the English Parliament had begun to think that Ireland must be attended to. A bill was brought in and carrried for repeal of the Penal Laws against the Catholics at home of which the Irish Acts had been a copy. It was an example which Ireland might follow if it pleased. Lord Nugent had brought up the trade question, and after a hard fight had wrung out some few concessions. The embargo was taken off, and Ireland, as an extraordinary favour, was allowed a free export of all her productions *except* woollens.

The absenteeism of her men of genius was a worse wrong to Ireland than the absenteeism of her landlords. If Edmund Burke had remained in the country where Providence had placed him, he might have changed the current of its history. When he took up her cause at last in earnest it was with a brain which the French revolution had deranged, and his interference became infinitely mischievous. In these preliminary questions, however, he exerted himself wisely and on the right side. The table of the House of Commons was covered with petitions from the English manufacturers against further indulgence. Ministers talked the usual cant that taxes in Ireland were low and living cheap, and that she must be weighted in the race or England would

[1] 'Depositions taken before the Rev. R. Dobbs, co. Antrim, April 27, 1778.' S. P. O.

be ruined. Liverpool, Manchester, Glasgow, were almost in insurrection. Burke had the courage to face the storm. He demanded for one thing the re-extension to Ireland of the benefit of the Navigation Laws, and though he failed for the time and quarrelled to no effective purpose with his Bristol constituents, he forced English statesmen into a faint perception of the enormity of their past policy, and familiarized them with the necessity of a change.

Not venturing to risk the stability of the Cabinet in a commercial tempest, yet aware that something must be done to bring Ireland into a better mind, Lord North fell again upon the Catholic question. He had reason to fear in fact that the Catholics were less loyal than they pretended, and that unless he insisted on concessions being made to them, he might have an Irish insurrection on his hands in addition to his other troubles.[1] Ireland must do what England had done.

[1] 'I have acquired a piece of information here, concerning a plot for a revolt in the west of Ireland among the Roman Catholics, with a view to overturn the present Government, by the aid of the French and Spaniards, and to establish such an one as prevails in this country, I mean the Cantons, by granting toleration to the Protestants. You may depend on its authenticity, and that at this moment many friars are going secretly from France to Ireland to set it going; though the late Acts passed for the relief of the Roman Catholics will, it is to be hoped, prevent it from succeeding; the motive to revolt having proceeded from the intolerable hardships they suffered. My intelligence comes from Rome, and I am pretty certain these Acts have been brought in, from the ministry receiving the same intelligence, which I know they have been in possession of for some time; as the measures for preventing the mischief proposed by the person who gives the information are exactly those that have been adopted. Depend on its being true, and that all the Roman Catholics in the west of Ireland

The Viceroy was directed to urge the friends of Government to swallow their scruples, and forward immediately some measure 'of expedient relief.' Something was better than nothing. Many intelligent Irishmen were aware that the Penal Laws had failed of their purpose and could no longer be retained. Others, not inclined to relaxation on the side of the Catholics, remembered that the Presbyterian disabilities had been laid on in a side clause of the anti-Popery Act. The relief of the Catholics might be accompanied appropriately with the relief of the Nonconformists. The Bill was entrusted to Luke Gardiner, the member for Dublin, who afterwards, as Lord Mountjoy, was to learn the real meaning of Catholic emancipation when he was piked and hacked to death at New Ross. At present he was known only as a rising politician, one of the very small body in the House of Commons whose principles were above suspicion. His proposal was to repeal the gavelling clauses of the Act of Anne, to allow the property of Catholics to descend unbroken, to take from the eldest son the power of making his father tenant for life by affecting conversion, to enable Catholics to purchase freehold property, and to relieve them from the vexatious limitations on their leases, which had led so many of the larger tenants to affect to be Protestants. These suggestions fell far short of the

have been ripe for a revolt some time; and that the plan was, and may be yet, a fixed purpose, that has been in agitation, and preparing to burst ever since France showed a disposition to break with England. — Lord Amherst to Lord North, from Geneva, June 17, 1778.' S. P. O.

committee's expectations, but short as they were they involved the final surrender of the policy which was designed to throw the whole soil of Ireland into Protestant hands. To part entirely with so cherished an expectation was more than the House was prepared for. An amendment to withhold from Catholics the right of buying freeholds, and to enable them instead to take leases for 999 years, was carried, after a long debate, by a majority of three.[1] A member in favour of the Presbyterians then moved the repeal of the Test clause. There had been a time when English Ministers were alive to the enormous impolicy of alienating so powerful a section of the Protestant community, and had endeavoured in vain to persuade the Irish Parliament to adopt a wiser attitude towards Dissent. Now, when the Irish Commons at least were willing, it was England that drew back. Lord North and the Viceroy, sharing the miserable prejudices of Churchmen against Dissenters, had determined that the Dissenters' disabilities should be maintained as a punishment of the Presbyterians for their American tendencies; but their hope was to avoid if possible the responsibility of the rejection, and throw the odium of it on the Irish Parliament. Very many members of the House of Commons, by the Viceroy's confession, were in its favour. Lord Buckinghamshire might have succeeded, however, in throwing out the clause by Castle influence, but for the tactics of some of the leaders of the ultra-Protestant party. Lord Shannon, Lord Ely, and other noblemen

[1] 111 to 108.

who were opposed to granting relief to the Catholics supported the relief of the Dissenters 'as a clog to the rest of the Bill.' They were aware of Lord North's resolution. They expected that if the Presbyterian claims formed part of the Bill as it was sent to England, one of two things would happen—either it would be struck out by the English Cabinet, and the party in the House which had supported Catholic relief only with a view of emancipating the Presbyterians would then reject it altogether, or the Bill would be returned entire, and then it would be thrown out by the bishops in the House of Lords.[1] Assisted by the nominees of these great persons, the clause was carried through the House of Commons. So intense, so childish, was still the animosity of the peers and prelates against the Non-conformists that it passed the Council on its way to England, only from an assurance that it would be removed there. Lord North, as was anticipated, struck it out. The sacramental test, which had done more harm in Ireland than all the penal acts against the Papists ten times told, was persistently retained. The Bill came back a relief to Papists only, and in this form it early met the fate which Lord Shannon and its friends designed for it. It was carried through the Commons with extreme difficulty, but it was carried, and the first step was taken in the series of measures yet perhaps unended, which are called Justice to Ireland. The Catholic Irish could once more acquire a hold on the soil of their fathers. The distinction between a tenure

[1] 'The Earl of Buckinghamshire to Lord Weymouth, June 20, 1778.'

of 999 years or a lease for five lives and a freehold was too arbitrary to be permanent. This feature in the Penal Laws, the harshest because the most difficult to evade, was abolished for ever, and with it the ever demoralizing, if not at the time when it was enacted wholly unnecessary, power bestowed on a child who conformed to the Establishment to prevent his father from disinheriting him.

With the Catholic Relief Bill was this time returned also the Militia Bill, as the Viceroy had desired; and 50,000*l.* borrowed from the Bank of England were sent over for greater security in a frigate to enable the Viceroy to protect the harbours.[1] As the summer wore on, privateers under French and American colours thickened in the Irish Channel, the fishermen and smugglers being still their constant friends. Two of them lay usually off Bray Head, others off Waterford and Cork, others at the Durseys or Cape Clear. Being built for speed they laughed at pursuit, and made prizes of any traders that passed them. Their occupation was so lively and so lucrative that it found imitators in the captains and owners of the contraband crafts, who

[1] 'The Earl of Buckinghamshire to Weymouth, June 3, 1778.—It is painful to observe that at a time when Lord North appeared really alarmed about Ireland Irish jobs were as rife as ever. Charles James Fox held a sinecure office of Clerk of the Pells in Ireland, with a salary of 2300*l.* a year. In this year, 1778, North induced Fox to surrender it in return for 30,000*l.* in hand and a life pension of 1700*l.* a year. The Clerkship of the Pells was then given to Mr. Jenkinson, afterwards Earl of Liverpool. The salary was raised from 2300*l.* to 3500*l.*, and the Irish Exchequer was thus burdened in this one transaction with an additional 1200*l.* on the office which Fox had held, the pension of 1700*l.* a year and the interest of 30,000*l.*'

went to Brest for letters of marque and returned to their haunts to plunder, as if engaged in honourable war. The Viceroy's 50,000*l.* meanwhile melted away, yet no coast guard was established and no militia. From piracy at sea the step would be a short one to pillage on shore, and the country gentlemen began in earnest to arm their tenants and combine in corps for mutual protection. The state of the Channel was creating serious inconvenience in England, and English attention already roused on the Irish problem began to direct itself upon it in earnest. Lord Nugent again brought up the subject in Parliament. He was an absentee; and it did not occur to him that his own duty was to return to his post. His patriotic perceptions had been quickened by the cessation of remittances. For two years he told the House of Commons that he had received no rents. The war had ruined the linen trade. The embargo had ruined the farmers. Artisan and peasant were starving. Land was offered at fourteen years' purchase and found no buyers. By every ground of obligation, by duty, by prudence, by common human feeling for the misery of their fellow-subjects, the English legislature was bound to interfere, and to remove at least the artificial hindrances which were shackling Irish enterprise. The Northern English millowners clamoured that the Irish were idle, and were starving by their own indolence. These interested coteries began to be listened to with less patience as the progress of the rebellion in America created an evidence so palpable of the possible consequences of misgovernment. The

King recommended that, in consequence of the undoubted distress in Ireland, the English Treasury should undertake the cost of the Irish regiments which were serving in America. The message brought on debates in which both Houses agreed to demand an account of the entire condition of Irish trade. Lord Shelburne ventured to say that America had revolted on far less provocation than had been habitually endured by Ireland. Lord Townshend, who knew Ireland, and knew what ailed her better than any of his hearers, spoke with remarkable feeling and eloquence, and implored the Peers to wake to a sense of the insolent cruelty with which the poor island had been so long afflicted. With keen antithesis he, too, like Shelburne, contrasted Ireland and America; the Irish patient under misery, which might have driven a wiser people into madness, the Americans rebellious in the midst of plenty and prosperity. Ireland, he said, perishing in the fetters which chained her industry, had petitioned humbly for partial release, and England had answered insolently, Break your chains if you can. The Americans had leagued themselves with England's inveterate enemy for her total destruction. To them England had said, You shall be free, you shall pay no taxes, we will interfere no more with you; remain with us on your own terms. If these replies were persisted in, the Irish when peace was made would emigrate to a land where honest labour would receive its due reward. While the war continued they would require to be held down by force, and at any moment they might refuse after

all either to buy English manufactures or export their own produce, and fleets and armies would preach to them in vain.

The Irish counties supported by petition the arguments of their English friends. The grand juries represented that the fields and highways were filled with crowds of wretched beings half naked and starving. Foreign markets were closed to them. The home market was destroyed by internal distress, and the poor artisans who had supported themselves by weaving were without work and without food. They had bought English goods as long as they had means to buy them. Now in their time of dire distress they had hoped the English Parliament would have been their friend. They learnt with pain and surprise that the only boon which would give them relief was still withheld. They besought the King to interpose in their favour, and procure them leave to export and sell at least the coarse frieze blankets and flannels which the peasants' wives and children produced in their cabins.[1] Eloquence and entreaty were alike in vain. The English Parliament, though compelled at last to listen to the truth, could not yet bend itself to act upon it. The House of Commons still refused to open the woollen trade, in whole or in part; and Ireland, now desperate and determined, and treading ominously in the steps of America, adopted the measures which Townshend had suggested, which long before had been

1779

[1] 'Humble petition of the High Sheriff and Grand Jury of Wicklow, April 6, 1779.' S. P. O.

recommended by Swift; and resolved to exclude from the Irish market every article of British manufacture which could be produced at home.[1]

The Viceroy, incapable of thought, and with a mind saturated with vulgar English prejudice, could see nothing in this movement but the secret action of French and American emissaries, and was rash enough to dream of prosecution. The law officers, wiser than he, forbade a folly which might have caused immediate insurrection. Weymouth allowed the dangers of the merchants' resolution, but advised Buckinghamshire to be quiet and conciliatory. He bade him tell the popular leaders that his majesty was deeply concerned

[1] 'Resolution taken at the Tholsel, in Dublin, April 26, 1779:—"That at this time of universal calamity and distress, when, through a total stagnation of our trade, poverty and wretchedness are now become the portion of those to whom hitherto labour and industry afforded a competency; when the emigration of thousands of our most useful manufacturers renders them acceptable and material acquisitions to other countries, and threatens ruin to our own; when, notwithstanding the most pathetic representations of our addresses, and our late humble petition to the throne, our sister country not only partially and unjustly still prevents us from benefiting by those advantages which the bountiful hand of Providence has bestowed on us, but even tantalizes us with imaginary schemes of improvement, and insults us with permission to cultivate our own soil; when the unjust, illiberal, and impolitic opposition of many self-interested people of Great Britain to the proposed encouragement of the trade and commerce of this kingdom originates in avarice and ingratitude. . . We will not directly or indirectly import or use any wares, the produce or manufacture of Great Britain, which can be produced or manufactured in this kingdom, until an enlightened policy, founded on principles of justice, shall appear to actuate the inhabitants of certain manufacturing towns there, who have taken an active part in opposing the regulations proposed in favour of the trade of Ireland."—Enclosed by the Earl of Buckinghamshire to Lord Weymouth.' S. P. O.

for his Irish subjects, and was occupied in devising means to relieve their distress.[1] Meanwhile he desired the Viceroy to send him his own thoughts on the cause of the distress, and to collect the private sentiments of such of the servants of the Crown and other gentlemen as he could best depend on.

The Viceroy complied. He collected the opinions of Lord Lifford (the Chancellor), of Mr. Flood, of Sir Lucius O'Brien, Lord Annaly, Mr. Pery (the Speaker), of Hussey Burgh, and last and most important, of Hely Hutchinson; and the papers drawn by these gentlemen, for the most part calm and well-reasoned, form the best exposition which exists of the poisonous forces which had so long been working in the country.

For himself Lord Buckinghamshire admitted that his own view could be but superficial. In his opinion 'the great leading mischief' had been the rise of rents. The absentees were most to blame, but the resident gentry were in fault almost as much. They lived beyond their incomes. They had heavily encumbered their estates. Between absentee rents, the interest on mortgages, the interest on the now fast accumulating State debt, the profits of pensions and of the many lucrative offices held as sinecures by Englishmen, the aggregate sum sent annually out of the kingdom was out of all proportion to its resources. The soil could not be cultivated, the mines and fisheries could not be developed without capital, and the drain prevented

[1] 'Lord Weymouth to the Earl of Buckinghamshire, May 7, 1779.'

capital from accumulating. Here, so far as the Viceroy could see, was the chief seat of the disease; of the manufacturing grievances others were fitter judges than himself.[1]

Mr. Flood was hesitating and diffident, as became a patriot in bondage, who was unable to speak his real convictions. Sir Lucius O'Brien demanded free trade, pure and simple. Lord Annaly,[2] an old-experienced lawyer, selected three special influences as working for evil in Ireland—the trade laws, absenteeism, and lastly, 'the idleness and licentiousness of the lower class of people, which had been greatly increased by the Octennial Bill'—a remark as pregnant as it was unexpected. The patent remedy for Irish evils then and since has been the extension of what is popularly called liberty and self-government. The Octennial Bill was the first move in that direction, and had begun already to bear its too familiar fruits.

Lord Lifford was an Englishman, and was, perhaps, over partial to his own country. Like the Viceroy, he dwelt on the exhaustion caused by the remittances out of the country, the burden on the exchequer from so many useless nominal offices, the high rents, the enormous and unjust county cesses, which pressed so heavily on the peasantry, and the suspension of the linen trade, caused by the American war; the loss, 'too, of *the great clandestine woollen trade* which had been opened

[1] 'Buckinghamshire to Weymouth, May 28, 1779.'

[2] John Gore, created Baron Annaly in 1776, Chief Justice of the Court of King's Bench.

with America,' and had been the chief support of the spinners and weavers. The existence of such a clandestine trade, however, required to be accounted for, and Lifford, feeling himself on dangerous ground, concluded cautiously: 'The great cause, or some great cause, lies probably much deeper. The seeds of the decay which have brought us to our present state may have been sown long ago. I fear there may be some radical cause, not sufficiently understood.' 'For remedy of present evils, nothing adequate can be found till the people of both kingdoms shall be brought to that temper and liberality of mind that they can think on so great a subject as citizens of the world, and feel indifferent, as one people, under one king, one constitution, and with one religion,[1] whether the manufactures of the empire are carried on in Down or in York.'

Pery wrote as a cultivated and moderate Irishman. His country, he said, was either by direct prohibition, or as a consequence of other restraining laws, cut off from trade, either with the British colonies or with the rest of the world. There could be no commerce without assortments of the various goods which were in demand in the country traded with, and without free permission to bring back the produce of that country. Ireland's present produce was limited to linen and

[1] This remarkable expression deserves to be attended to. Intellect, education, property, political power, everything that could make itself felt as a constituent of national life, was still Protestant. To undo this, to restore Ireland to the condition in which it stood before the Cromwellian conquest, has been the sole result, almost wholly accomplished now, by England's penitence for past misgovernment.

provisions. In the linen trade she had powerful rivals, and she was forbidden at present to send the most profitable branch of that manufacture to America, where there was the readiest market for it. Her provision trade had been violently destroyed by the recent embargo. Pery did not question the justice of the restraining laws, but he ventured to doubt the policy of them. It could not be England's interest to keep Ireland miserable. England was the centre of the empire. To England the wealth gained in the extremities must necessarily flow. She should be ashamed to confess that she dreaded Ireland's rivalry. Her policy should be to allow the Irish to exert themselves in whatever branch of industry best suited them, in common with their British fellow-subjects, and leave them to gather the harvest of their labours. This was all that they asked, and they ought not to be contented with less. Expedients might be tried, and probably would be tried, but they would fail of their object, and would only prolong the irritation. Let the restrictive laws be removed; the Irish and English nations would then be united in affection as much as in interest, and the power of malice would be unable to destroy their harmony; but the seeds of discord had been sown, and if allowed to spring up would soon overspread the land.

All parties were represented on the Viceroy's list. Hussey Burgh was more advanced than Pery, though, perhaps, no truer a patriot. He was young, but just turned thirty, handsome, and with a large fortune. His expenses still exceeded his income. He drove six

horses in the Phœnix Park, and he was attended everywhere by three outriders. He was indolent, but he had shown abilities in Parliament so considerable, that the Government had made him Prime Sergeant, rather to protect themselves against his hostility than in the hope of securing his support. He was called the Cicero of the Senate, and at happy moments he exceeded even Grattan in pregnant powers of expression.

'It has come to this,' Hussey Burgh replied to the Viceroy's request for his sentiments on the Irish difficulty. 'England must either support this kingdom, or allow her to support herself. Her option is to give in trade or to give in money; without one or the other the expenses cannot be supplied. If she gives in money, she suffers a country of great extent and fertility to become a burden instead of a benefit. If she gives in trade, whatever wealth we may acquire will flow back upon herself. Were I asked what is for the benefit of Manchester, what is for the benefit of Glasgow, I should answer that monopolies, however destructive of the general weal, are beneficial to those who possess them. Were I asked what is the most effectual measure for promoting the common wealth and strength of his majesty's subjects of both kingdoms, I answer, an equal and perfect freedom of trade, without which one of those kingdoms has neither strength, wealth, nor commerce, and must become a burden on the other.'

The contribution of Mr. Hely Hutchinson was the first sketch of a book which he afterwards published on Ireland's commercial disabilities, and which earned his

pardon from Irish patriotism for his subserviency to the Court and Lord Townshend.

'You ask my sentiments on the state of my country,' he answered to the Viceroy's invitation. 'I see ruin everywhere; the rate of interest rising, the revenue falling, between twenty and thirty thousand merchants and artisans in Dublin alone reduced to penury and supported by alms. The public debt exceeds a million, and the interest is remitted to England. Rents have risen, salaries have increased. Pensions, annuities, the American rebellion, the embargo, all in their several ways, have contributed to our distress. But the great and permanent cause of our misfortunes is the restraint of our commerce and the discouragement of our manufactures. The chief produce of our soil is wool, which we are forbidden to work; our weavers starve, therefore, for want of employment. Our principal material is a drug, and we import our woollen goods from England at a cost of 360,000*l.* a year. Your people are jealous of us. You say labour is cheaper here and taxes lower, and if you leave our trade free, we shall undersell you in foreign markets. Why is our labour cheaper? Our people live on potatoes and milk, or, more often, water. Why? Because they can afford no better. Were trade free they would earn higher wages and demand better fare. Underpaid labour is dear labour in the end. You do your work cheaper in England than we can do, for you undersell us with your woollens in our own market. Open our trade, and the prices of all things will then rise, labour included. Our wool will be

manufactured at home with the help of English capital. The chief profit will pass to you, but our people will prosper too. They will learn industry and grow in numbers, and be of service to the State.

'Your exclusion of us from the woollen trade has hurt you even more than it has hurt us. One pack of Irish wool works up two packs of French wool. The French supply themselves with smuggled wool from Ireland; they are thus able to undersell you everywhere, and your loss is then double what it would be if we exported our wool manufactured by ourselves. You have forced us into an illicit commerce, and our very existence now depends upon it. Ireland has paid to Great Britain for eleven years past double the sum that she collects from the whole world in all the trade which Great Britain allows her, a fact not to be paralleled in the history of the world. Whence did the money come? But one answer is possible. It came from the contraband trade, and surely it is madness to suffer an important part of the empire to continue in such a condition. You defeat your own objects. You wished to secure a monopoly in foreign markets. You have not secured it. You wished to be the only purchasers of Irish wool, and the only sellers of woollen goods to Ireland. The quantity of wool exported from Ireland to England in the last ten years has been almost nothing, and we are driven to consume our native goods ourselves. As you have ordered it we can sell our wool and woollen goods only to you. We can buy woollen goods from you only. You impose a duty equal to a prohibition

on our sale of woollen goods to you; you therefore in fact say to us that we shall not sell to you, and that we shall buy from you only. If such a law related to two private men instead of two kingdoms, and enjoined that in buying or selling the same goods, one individual should deal with one man only in exclusion of others, it would in effect ordain that both as buyer and seller that man should fix his own price and profit, and would refer to his discretion the loss and profit of the other dealer. You prohibited us from exporting live cattle into England, at the time of the prohibition a grievous calamity to us. You thus forced us into breeding sheep, and by the restraint of our woollen manufactures drove us next into the practice of running wool. In vain you endeavoured to prevent it by penalties and seizures. The world has become a great commercial society, and if you exclude trade from one channel it will make another for itself.

'Your jealousies are of recent date; not till the end of the seventeenth century was there ever an endeavour to interfere with Irish manufactures. Edward the Third, Edward the Fourth, Henry the Seventh specially favoured Ireland. Neither of the Cecils discouraged us. Charles the First, the Protector, and Charles the Second desired especially to develope the woollen trade among us. Restrictive laws never answer. You maintain a corn law, and a corn law is only mischievous. The farmer pays dearly in all that he buys for the advanced prices which manufacturers pay for corn. Enlarge your policy, our people will then

increase and will grow more prosperous. Merchants, sailors, farmers, manufacturers will spring up in the place of spiritless, starving drones who are a burden and a reproach to the empire in which they live.

'Try the experiment at all events. It is to be hoped that the enlightened spirit which led to this enquiry will direct its progress, and that the representations of interested individuals will not decide your resolutions. Commercial bodies are like other corporations in desiring to be monopolists. The interest of the dealer in any branch of trade or manufacture is always different from or opposite to that of the public. To widen the market and narrow the competition is the interest of the dealer. To widen the market may frequently be the interest of the public, but to narrow the competition must always be against it.' [1]

---

[1] 'Opinions of Lord Lifford, Sir Lucius O'Brien, Mr. Flood, Lord Annaly, Mr. Hussey Burgh, Mr. Pery, and Mr. Hely Hutchinson, delivered to the Viceroy in June and July, 1779.' S. P. O. Abridged.

SECTION IV.

MEANWHILE Ireland was arming, and arming in a form which, however convenient to an embarrassed treasury, might prove embarrassing should Lord North resolve, after all, on maintaining the restraining laws. After Paul Jones's visit to Carrickfergus, Belfast applied to the Viceroy for troops. The Viceroy sent down sixty dragoons as the most which he was able to spare. The Militia Act had been passed. On the part of the gentlemen there was no objection to the Viceroy's enrolling as many regiments as he pleased. Sir Lucius O'Brien among others most strongly urged him to lose not a moment in providing the country with its constitutional garrison.[1] A governor, the most moderately qualified for his duties, should have known that if there was to be a military force in the kingdom he ought himself to have the control and disposition of it. Lord Buckinghamshire unfortunately was embarrassed for money. The taxes could not be collected owing to the distress. The customs were yielding next to nothing owing to the collapse of trade. To borrow was difficult, if not impossible, and to embody the militia would require a large sum. As matters stood, Belfast, Cork, Waterford, Limerick, Galway, were wholly unprotected. There were not soldiers enough in the country for the commonest police duties. The militia could not be

1779

[1] 'The Viceroy to Lord Weymouth, June 30, 1779.'

raised for want of funds. The summer was coming back, and with the summer would return the pirates and privateers. Gentlemen who had property to lose grew impatient and insisted that if Government could not protect them they must raise corps among themselves, for their own defence. Lord Buckinghamshire did not much like the proposal. A few companies already raised had assumed a *quasi*-political complexion, but it was impossible to forbid men to take care of their own property. If volunteer corps were formed they would be under the command of great peers and commoners who were men of property and were Protestants as well. The Catholic Relief made a difficulty in refusing permission. 'The Protestants,' the Viceroy said, 'might plausibly have murmured if they had been forbidden to arm in their own defence when the Legislature was protecting men whom they had so long deemed their inveterate enemies.' [1]

The English Cabinet was clearer sighted than the Viceroy. They perceived at any rate that to allow an indiscriminate arming of the Irish people, or even of the Protestant Irish, in their present humour, was exceedingly ill-judged. Weymouth wrote in haste that Lord Buckinghamshire must prevent the corps from assembling, that he must take their arms from them, that he must insist on nominating the officers himself. To this there was but one answer, it was too late for such steps; perhaps, in the absence of a militia, they were

[1] 'The Earl of Buckinghamshire to Lord Weymouth, May 24, 1779.' S. P. O.

from the beginning impossible. The movement had spread as if the whole country had a purpose in it ready prepared. To interfere there must be a British army, and there were not 3000 British soldiers in the island; the executive was so feeble, and the population so ill affected, that even in the quietest times a convicted murderer could not be carried to the gallows without a military guard to prevent a rescue.[1]

Every hour the problem became more abstruse. If the Protestants were to arm, the Catholics considered the example worth imitating. They, too, began to form into companies, and had they continued there would probably have been immediate bloodshed. Urgent representations, however, being made to their leaders in private, they desisted. Not so the country gentlemen. In vain Weymouth bade the Viceroy pour water on the fire. Corps was added to corps. The suspicion that the Government was alarmed increased the rate at which they were multiplied, and as the volunteers gathered confidence from their numbers they began naturally to consider what effect their assembly might have on the public question about which the country was so anxious. It was said openly that in the presence of such a force England could no longer refuse Ireland free trade, and carried as they were off their feet by enthusiasm and excitement the chance for the present was gone of holding the Irish Parliament in leading strings by the old methods. 'The occasional favour of Government would not induce men to incur the odium of their country at

[1] 'To Lord Weymouth, May 24, 1779.'

so critical a time.'[1] The troubled Viceroy could find but one consolation. There were no symptoms of treason. The noble lords and gentlemen who were at the head of the movement were above suspicion of collusion with the enemy. The country was never in better spirit to resist invasion. 1779

It was still possible to call out the militia as a counterpoise, and if the country could be considered safe from invasion the volunteers might, perhaps, dissolve to escape expense. Buckinghamshire applied to Weymouth for money. Weymouth answered that there was none to send. The Viceroy must call together the Parliament. The Viceroy said that if he was ordered to call the Parliament, and to call it three months before the usual time, he would obey, but he would not be answerable for the consequences. Free trade would, in fact, have to be conceded at all events. There was no escape from it.[2] A demand for money for the militia might lead to further pretensions, which it would be difficult to satisfy.

In arming thus rapidly the country owed its escape from a dangerous adventure. The volunteer corps had been formed not an hour too soon. Encouraged by his exploits in the past summer, Paul Jones had collected a formidable squadron at L'Orient, a ship of the line, three powerful frigates, a sloop, and a heavy eighteen-gun cutter.[3] His crews amounted to 2000 men, and

[1] 'The Earl of Buckinghamshire to Lord Weymouth, June 12.' S. P. O.

[2] 'To Weymouth, July 12.' S. P. O.

[3] The ship was 'La Grande

his intention was to land at Galway, Derry, and wherever else there was a prospect of plunder. He
1779 left L'Orient on the 12th of August. At the end of the month he was in Ballinskellig's Bay, looking out for prizes, and had Ireland been as unprepared as in the previous years, he would have ventured undoubtedly a desperate exploit of some kind, and perhaps have roused the Western Irish into revolt.[1] His many secret friends along the coast must have informed him that it was no longer safe to risk a landing. He bore away to the North Sea, where he fell in with the summer fleet from the Baltic, and after a desperate fight had the honour of capturing two English frigates, the 'Serapis' and the 'Countess of Scarborough,' and carrying them as prizes into the Texel.

It was no slight thing to have protected Ireland from an attack by a force capable of such an exploit. The fresh proof at once of the reality of the danger and of their own ability to encounter it, added new impulse to the volunteer movement which the Viceroy had been forbidden to encourage. He found himself invited 'by several most respectable noblemen' who had formed companies, to issue muskets for them from the Government stores. He asked advice from the Irish Council. The Irish Council told him that he must comply, and the muskets were given out. By the end of Sep-

---

Ville,' of 64 guns; the frigates, 'Le Bon Homme Richard,' of 40, the 'Alliance,' 36, and the 'Patrie,' 32.

[1] 'Depositions taken by Rev. Doctor Day, at Tralee, August, 1779.' *MSS.* Dublin Castle.

tember over forty thousand men had been enrolled and armed, under no authority except what they might organize for themselves. Some had been raised by associations, some by the merchants' companies in the towns, most of them by the peers and country gentlemen: the result being that at a moment of national discontent when men of all creeds and parties were united to demand from England a repeal of her unjust legislation, Ireland suddenly found herself in possession of an army of her own which there was no force in the country capable of resisting.

Under these circumstances the Irish Parliament was about to meet, and the patriot leaders had determined that the occasion of their own strength and England's weakness should not pass from them unused. Notwithstanding the agitation which had been raised in England itself in favour of measures of relief to Ireland, the Cabinet was still unable to resolve on frank and free concessions. The Viceroy had been told at first that he was to evade the subject in the Speech from the Throne. He had objected humbly that to be entirely silent 'would indicate a settled resolution' to concede nothing. It would be difficult, he admitted, to avoid creating expectations on one side or embarrassments on the other; he proposed 'to be wary in his language and inform the House merely that particulars would be laid before them which would enable the national wisdom' to devise measures for the relief of the kingdom;[1] but

[1] 'The Earl of Buckinghamshire to Lord Weymouth, September 26, 1779.'

something or other it was necessary that he should say. Retouched, and rendered still more vague by Weymouth's pen, the draft of a Speech, conceived in this spirit, had been returned from England.

The Viceroy's secrets were ill kept. Half his council being in league with the patriots, the purport of the Speech was known some days before the opening, and on a soft October afternoon, Henry Grattan, Denis Daly, and Hussey Burgh sate on the shingle beach at Bray, with the transparent water washing at their feet, to arrange the approaching campaign. Hussey Burgh being a servant of the Crown thought it indecent to take a leading part, and, after a general conversation, left his two friends to themselves. The address would naturally be an echo of the Speech. Grattan and Daly resolved on moving its rejection pure and simple. The session was to open on the 12th. As the day approached the Viceroy's uneasiness did not diminish. The Council were called for a rehearsal of the Speech. Hussey Burgh and the Duke of Leinster, though they were both in Dublin, refused to attend. The plan of the Castle was, that if the address was opposed, John Foster[1] should move for a committee to inquire into the state of the nation, and that a similar motion should be made in the Upper House. The intention was betrayed, and at the advice of Barry Yelverton,[2] Grattan,

1779

[1] Son of Anthony Foster, Chief Baron of the Court of Exchequer in Ireland, afterwards Speaker of the House of Commons, and created Lord Oriel.

[2] Then a distinguished barrister, Member for Carrickfergus, afterwards Chief Baron and Lord Avonmore.

when the time came, moved, instead of a rejection, an equivalent amendment, 'That it was not by temporary expedients, but by a free export, that the nation was now to be saved from impending ruin.' Hely Hutchinson, though no one in private had more effectively pressed on the Government the necessity of a radical change of policy, exerted himself to protect them from a hostile vote. Scott, the Attorney-General, spoke powerfully on the same side; but the corruption on which they had relied failed at the hour of trial, as it deserved to fail. The purchased 'servants of the Crown' fell from their allegiance. Hussey Burgh suggested that for Free Trade, if the Government disliked the word, might be read 'opening of the ports.' Flood seeing the patriot tide was rising again, returned to his old allegiance, snapped the cords which bound him to the Castle, and with a half apology for having ever taken office[1] insisted that the amendment should go to Free Trade. 'Ireland asked no more and would not be satisfied with less.' In vain Sir Robert Heron, the Secretary, pleaded that such amendments could only produce ill consequences; the friends of Government, purchased so expensively at the elections, could not be expected to be more submissive than a Prime Sergeant and a Vice-Treasurer. The Castle did not venture a division, and the amendment to the address was carried unanimously. The next day, the 13th, the usual vote of thanks to the Viceroy was proposed. With the Earl of

[1] He allowed himself to say that 'the Vice-Treasurership had been the unsolicited gift of his sovereign.'

Buckinghamshire, an innocent automaton, there was no quarrel, and it was allowed to pass; but Tom Conolly in the Commons, and the Duke of Leinster in the Lords, moved along with it a vote of thanks to the Volunteers of Ireland, and this was carried with enthusiasm. On the 14th, the Volunteer Corps of Dublin, with the Duke of Leinster at their head, lined the streets between College Green and the Castle, when the Speaker and the entire Lower House marched in procession to present the amended address. The Viceroy had appealed to Pery to prevent what could be intended only as a display of force. Pery said it was impossible, and advised the Viceroy to appear to sympathise.[1]

'In the present disposition of the House of Commons,' Lord Buckinghamshire wrote five days later, 'it will be difficult to resist the motions now in contemplation. Unless his majesty in his answer holds out strong hopes on the subject of commerce, motions will be strongly pressed to reduce the Establishment. The Money Bill will be limited to six months. The Duke of Leinster, Mr. Conolly, and the Prime Sergeant are decidedly hostile to us.' There was but one hope. Even in the midst of the effervescence, base motives were still at work with the more experienced politicians. 'If some popular orator could be brought over' the apostate members might yet be recovered. 'The Duke,' he said, 'has been with me this morning and

[1] 'The Earl of Buckinghamshire to Lord Weymouth, October 13 and 14, 1779.' S. P. O.

presents his compliments; his brother, the seaman, being promoted, is a point insisted on.'[1]

Unhappily, time pressed. The Duke's brother, the seaman, could not be made an admiral in a moment. Unless trade was opened Parliament would vote no more war taxes. It might even appropriate the existing duties to the payment of debt. Nay, having now a force of its own, it might abolish the military establishments. 'You must give way,' Heron wrote on the 25th to Sir Stanien Porter, 'so far, at least, as to open to Ireland the Colonial trade; their woollens being legally exported cannot, to say the least of it, be more prejudicial to Great Britain than the smuggling them.'

A frank answer from England would not, perhaps, have checked the torrent which had now broken loose, but at least it might have made the stream flow in good humour. An answer came on the 1st of November, but enigmatic as an oracle from the Delphic priestess. The King was said to be sorry for the distresses of Ireland, to be attentive to her interests, and to be always ready to concur in measures which, on mature consideration, should be thought conducive 'to the general welfare of all his subjects.' 'All his subjects' comprehended the monopolists of Liverpool: Irish suspicion flamed into a blaze; and on King William's birthday, four days later, the volunteers, with the Duke of Leinster again at their head, paraded in front of the statue outside the Parliament house. Flags were dis- November

[1] 'The Viceroy to Lord Weymouth, October 18. Most secret.' S. P. O.

played with impassioned blazonries—'Relief to Ireland,' 'The Volunteers of Ireland,' 'A Short Money Bill,' 'Fifty thousand of us ready to die for our country.' More significantly still, two cannon were trailed round the pedestal, with an emblem, 'Free Trade or this:' and amidst the roar of artillery, musketry volleys, and the shouts of ten thousand voices, Dublin intimated that it must have its way, or England must be prepared for the consequences.

For once Ireland had a definitely just cause, and was strong in virtue of it.

'If the expectations of this kingdom are not received with lenity,' wrote the fluttered imbecile who represented the majesty of the Crown, 'every species of disorder may be apprehended. Rational men are seriously alarmed. Those who were principal promoters of the volunteer companies feelingly lament their own achievements. You will pity the situation of a man who has laboured uniformly to do his duty divested of every other consideration. What a reflection! that in the present critical situation of the British empire, the kingdom under my care should contribute such an addition to the already almost insurmountable difficulties of English government. Oppressed with the reflection consequential to this idea, it is too much in addition to be fretted hourly with inadmissible solicitations, and to be obliged to frequently combat suspicions of a duplicity to the which my heart has ever been a stranger. Torn by a thousand conflicting passions, it is a necessary duty to assume a face of calmness, and I

must not risk, however provoked, by manifesting well-justified resentment, to lose any chance of support to his majesty's service.'[1]

The House of Commons had shown spirit, but its fervour was not equal to the temperature out of doors, and required to be stimulated. The Attorney-general, Scott,[2] speaking of the demonstration on the 4th, had asked whether Parliament existed to register the pleasure of the volunteers. He had been heard with more favour than the populace approved; and on the 15th, early in the morning, a drum beat in the liberties behind St. Patrick's Cathedral. A vast body of artisans armed with bludgeons, cutlasses, and pistols, gathered at the call, and made their way to Scott's house, in Harcourt-place. Finding that he had gone to the Four Courts, part of them remained to break his windows; part followed to the courts swearing they would have him out. He had been warned in time and had taken refuge in the Castle. The mob, not caring to encounter the cannon there, surged off to College Green, beset the doors of the House of Commons, and, as the members came up, made them alight from their carriages and swear to vote for Free Trade and a Short Money Bill. The Mayor was sent for to the Speaker's chamber. In the afternoon a squadron of dragoons was brought down to the barracks, and at the Speaker's requisition the Mayor went to the doors to give them orders to act.

[1] 'The Earl of Buckinghamshire to Lord Hillsborough, November 8, 1779.' S. P. O.

[2] Afterwards Lord Clonmell and Chief Justice.

The rioters had gathered within the railings out of reach of the horses. The unfortunate man no sooner appeared than cutlasses were flourished over his head; and he was told that the first word that he uttered to the soldiers was to be the last that he should speak in this world. More discreet than valiant he shrunk back into the passage. The dragoons, finding that they were to receive no orders, rode away as they came, the House adjourned, and the people were left masters of the field.[1] The volunteers, who had charged themselves with the peace of the country, might have gained credit by interposing; but they preferred to remain passive, and for an entire day Dublin was in possession of a band of ruffians. Yelverton, when the House reassembled the next morning with plumes somewhat ruffled, spoke in the people's favour. Scott, who had narrowly escaped with his life, called Yelverton a 'seneschal of sedition.' Yelverton replied with calling Scott 'the uniform drudge of every English administration.' Grattan interposed between the angry combatants. The House asserted its dignity by a resolution condemning the assemblies of mobs to coerce the debates. The Mayor and Sheriff were called to the bar to be reprimanded for their cowardice. The Mayor said that if he had told the dragoons to act they would have used their sabres, and would have hurt some of the poor people. The House submitted to the explanation, the Speaker gravely saying that 'the Mayor's unwillingness to endanger the lives of his fellow-citizens might deserve

[1] 'The Earl of Buckinghamshire to Lord Weymouth, November 15.'

commendation, but that if such violence was repeated lenity to the guilty might prove fatal to the innocent.'[1]

The tone assumed in the Parliament in England did not tend to smooth the Viceroy's course. Lord Hillsborough, an Irishman who preferred making his political career in the more important country, had ventured to say, and say with apparent authority there, that Irish distress was a child of the imagination, or if real was due only to laziness. The war and the bankrupt state of the Irish treasury had made it necessary for the secretary to ask for additional taxation. Grattan moved at once that in the presence of so much general poverty it was inexpedient to grant new taxes, and carried his resolution by 170 votes to 47. The secretary then asked for the ordinary supplies to be granted as usual for two years. The House, by this time thoroughly infected with the spirit of the country, accepted the amendment which the Viceroy had dreaded, and passed a Six Months' Money Bill, by 138 to 100.[2] It was in these debates that Hussey Burgh made his reputation as an orator by the famous sentence so often quoted. Some one had said Ireland was at peace. 'Talk not to me of peace,' said Hussey Burgh; 'Ireland is not at peace; it is smothered war. England has sown her laws as dragon's teeth, and they have sprung up as

[1] 'The Viceroy to Lord Weymouth, November 16.'—*Commons' Journals, Ireland*, November 17.

[2] A very full house for Ireland. The whole number of members was 300; but some had seats in the English Parliament; some were in the army; some always were purposely absent, intimating that they were open to negotiation.

armed men.'[1] Never yet had Grattan so moved the Irish House of Commons as it was moved at these words. From the floor the applause rose to the gallery. From the gallery it was thundered to the crowd at the door. From the door it rung through the city. As the tumult calmed down Hussey Burgh rose again, and, amidst a renewed burst of cheers, declared that he resigned the office which he held under the Crown. 'The gates of promotion are shut,' exclaimed Grattan, 'and the gates of glory are opened.'

[1] These words are sometimes quoted as referring to the Penal Laws. They had nothing to do with the Penal Laws, and related entirely to the restrictions on trade.

SECTION V.

Lord North's Cabinet had to the last persuaded themselves that the storm would pass over. The King had recommended Ireland to the consideration of the English Parliament at the opening of the session in November. The Ministers, however, had fought in both Houses for delay, till the news of the short Money Bill opened their eyes. They had not now to reckon with miserable Celts, who could be trampled on with comparative impunity. The iniquitous legislation of past generations had roused all ranks, both races and both creeds, to a common indignation. The resource of playing party against party would serve no longer. The first exasperation was vented upon the Viceroy. 'You send us the opinions of others,' Lord Hillsborough angrily wrote to him. 'Why don't you send us your own? The King desires that you will let us know your sentiments immediately.'[1] 1779

It was unjust to blame Lord Buckinghamshire; he had already told Lord Weymouth, and he now again repeated to Lord Hillsborough, that if Ireland was to be restored to tranquillity, the trade restrictions must be given up, and that the repeal must be immediate and complete.[2] The intelligent part of England had arrived at the same conclusion. On the 1st of December

[1] 'Lord Hillsborough to the Earl of Buckinghamshire, December 1.' Substance of a long brusque letter.

[2] 'The Viceroy to Lord Hillsborough, December 9.'

Lord Shelburne spoke at length in the Upper House of the abominable system by which the affairs of Ireland had long been carried on. The Irish, he said, were now determined to have their trade restored to them, and he moved a vote of censure on the Cabinet for having delayed concession so long. Lord Camden followed him, insisting on the impolicy of alienating the Irish people at a moment so critical in the fortunes of the empire. In the Commons, Mr. Burke, with even greater effectiveness, contrasted the terms offered to America with the obstinate perseverance in wrong towards his own long-suffering countrymen. The Irish, he said, had learnt at last that justice was to be had from England only when demanded at the sword's point. They were now in arms with a good cause, and they would either have redress or they would end the connection between the two islands.

Opinion was pronouncing itself so decisively that the Ministers escaped censure only by pleading that the laws complained of were none of theirs. They were inherited from the past century. They had been wrought into the constitution, and Parliament had always refused to reconsider them. Acquitted, however, of responsibility for the past, the Cabinet could only earn their full pardon by consenting to instant reparation. The repeal of the Restriction Acts was proposed on the spot, and swept through both Houses with extraordinary spirit. A copy was sent to Ireland before the forms were completed, to allay the tempest, ere it could swell into fresh acts of violence.

'I congratulate your excellency,' wrote Lord Hillsborough, as if the credit of what had been done belonged to the Cabinet, 'on this important event. On its being proposed to his majesty that a commission should be prepared to pass this Act, his majesty declared that he would go to the House in person to give his assent to a measure conferring so considerable an advantage on his faithful subjects of Ireland.'[1]

The Irish Parliament meantime, while waiting for the resolution of England, had been usefully occupied. The leaders of the Opposition, if the Viceroy was to be believed, were as much as ever influenced by personal motives, and in a moment of success so sudden and unlooked for, were each aspiring to make capital out of it for his own advancement. 'When,' Lord Buckinghamshire said, 'the bravery and determined spirit which personally distinguishes this nation is considered, the little feminine jealousy and suspicion which they manifest in political business is scarcely credible. I have hardly ever met with a man who will believe that the whole truth is fairly told him. Every moment of attention which you show to an individual is measured, and a whisper is a mortal offence.'[2] Perhaps experience of the whispers of viceroyalty might in some degree justify alarm. Only a few weeks before, Lord Buckinghamshire had been looking for a road out of his difficulties by 'bringing over' a popular orator. Whether

[1] 'Lord Hillsborough to the Earl of Buckinghamshire, December 23, 1779.'

[2] 'To Lord Hillsborough, December 15.'

honestly or dishonestly, however, the Opposition were now addressing themselves to the removal of genuine mischiefs. On the 1st of December the Speaker presented the heads of a bill aimed specially at the object which had been attempted unsuccessfully in the Catholic Relief Bill—the repeal of the Test clause in the Act of Anne. It had been anticipated that a second effort would be made in the Presbyterian interest during the session; and the Cabinet had ordered the Viceroy to throw every obstruction in the way. But the House of Commons was no longer amenable to the usual influences. The Bill of Repeal was sent before the Irish Council for transmission by a unanimous vote. If it went to England it was unlikely that under existing circumstances the Cabinet would risk a fresh quarrel on a secondary subject. If the measure was to be stopped at all it must be stopped in Ireland, and the bishops in the Council, consistent to the last, desired to strain a power which it was doubtful if the Council constitutionally possessed, and suppressed the bill on their own responsibility. The Chancellor, the Attorney-general, and Mr. Foster warned them against so dangerous an experiment. The bill went over, and this time was returned, and the Presbyterians—the right-arm of Irish Protestantism, though never admitted to the privileges of the establishment, and ensuring by their exclusion its eventual fall—were no longer insulted by being declared unfit to hold office, civil or military, above the rank of a parish constable.[1]

December.

[1] 'The Earl of Buckinghamshire to Lord Hillsborough, December 31.' Secret.

Another attempt was less successful. Nothing in the Irish administration was more scandalous than the tenure of judges during pleasure only. 1780 It degraded an office which ought to have been guarded most scrupulously from contact with parliamentary corruption into an instrument for controlling or influencing the Irish bar. It stood already condemned in a speech from the throne. Yet it not only survived, but Lord Harcourt had pointedly objected to a change, and every effort made by Parliament had failed. Hoping that they might now find England more pliant, the Commons again sent over the heads of a bill to assimilate the Irish to the English tenure. Once more this bill was rejected, the Viceroy tacitly admitting the character of the objection to it in a passing allusion.

'As the having the commissions of the Irish judges the same as in England has been a favourite wish in this country, it was never, as I understand, thought expedient to oppose the heads in the House of Commons; the reasons upon which those heads have been disapproved by his majesty's British servants not being of a nature to be agitated here even in quiet times.'[1]

Ill pleased that the responsibility of rejection should be thrown on them, the Cabinet had blamed the Viceroy for not having stopped the bill in the House of Commons. Weighed, perhaps, in accurate balances, this measure was as important as free trade itself; but it was a subject on which the Irish public had scarcely troubled themselves to think; and whether it was

[1] 'The Viceroy to Lord Hillsborough, January 26, 1780.'

allowed or rejected was comparatively of trifling moment beside the all-important, all-absorbing question, Would or would not England abandon her commercial monopoly? The reports of the debates at Westminster had been read with passionate avidity, and had prepared men's minds to hear that England had yielded. Nevertheless, when the certainty arrived, when the copy of the Act of repeal was delivered and laid by the Viceroy before the two Houses, the news seemed almost too good to be true. To these mischievous and wicked restrictive Acts the Irish had justly referred the wretchedness that weighed on them. In their impetuosity and eagerness they forgot that when an evil had been of long growth, time would be needed for recovery. They conceived that the repeal would be as the removal of a spell, that Ireland would at once blossom into abundance, and every bare back be clothed and every stomach be filled. In gratitude for the so intensely desired boon, the wrongs of a century were forgotten or forgiven. Dublin was illuminated. Addresses of gratitude were sent over from the two Houses. The happy Viceroy reported that his woes were over, and that 'no peevish question was allowed to cloud the sunshine of the brightest day the kingdom ever knew.'[1] The dispositions of nations unfortunately do not change so easily.

[1] 'The Viceroy to Lord Hillsborough, December 28.'

SECTION VI.

THE worst effect of unjust legislation is the difficulty of retiring from it without causing worse evils than those which are removed. Concessions necessary, because right in themselves, shake the principle of authority when they are yielded to menace. The momentary gratitude is succeeded by the recollection that the wrong would have been continued had there been strength to continue it. The powers of State have been transferred for the time from the rulers to the ruled; and the subject takes his own measure of the changed situation. He conceives that he has established his claim to be a better judge of what is good for him than those who had confessedly abused their superiority, and he proceeds at once to make fresh demands where justice is less clearly on his side. Hostile feelings and hostile lines of action begin again to manifest themselves. The superior power having sacrificed its pride and interest considers itself entitled to reap a reward in a return of good feeling, and resents the persistence in an attitude for which it conceives that there is no longer a reason. Thus measures which promise best for reconciliation are found often to have made the breach still wider. 1780

A peculiarly unlucky complication at this moment spoilt the effects of the repeal of the restrictive Acts, and made England repent of having given way. The

embargo had led to a clandestine trade in salt meat with France and Spain. The Irish farmer considered that he had a natural right to defend himself against robbery, and had found both pleasure and profit in opening a market with the enemies of his oppressors. The embargo had been taken off, but the connections which had been opened could not be immediately broken. At the beginning of January it was ascertained that a Cork contractor was loading provision cargoes in the harbour, which were intended for the French fleet. Coming so immediately on what the English Cabinet regarded as an act of sublime generosity, they sent orders to the Viceroy to seize the contractor's vessels. The Viceroy was obliged to answer that if he attempted any such measure there would be violent resistance. It was a practical illustration of the meaning of trusting the military power in Ireland out of the hands of the constituted Government. It was not enough that when England was fighting single-handed against her revolted colonies and a European coalition, Irish politicians should take advantage of her difficulties. They were choosing the moment when their requests had been granted to give active help to her enemies.

'It appears,' Lord Hillsborough wrote sarcastically to the unlucky Viceroy, 'to be little short of a declaration that Government in Ireland is dissolved. Dependent as we are for information upon your excellency, we know not what to recommend, and in this dilemma we are left to lament the unhappy situation of affairs. It is impossible to reflect without concern and astonish-

ment that, while his majesty is taking every step in his power to give satisfaction to his Irish subjects, there is apprehension of dangerous violence if measures are taken to prevent his enemies from receiving supplies from them, without which they would find it difficult to carry on the war. We cannot bid you lay on an embargo in the face of possible consequences, or send a message to Parliament which might compromise the prerogative. But is there no member who would have public spirit enough to stand up in the House of Commons, and move an address to your excellency to prevent the enemies' fleet from being victualled from Ireland? I recommend your excellency to exert yourself on this occasion. Stopping these provisions is equal to the gain of a battle at sea, and may go further towards giving his majesty superiority over his enemies.'[1] 1780

Lord Hillsborough should have known his countrymen better than to make extravagant suggestions. The Viceroy laid his letter before the Privy Council. The Privy Council told him that 'for a private member to move an address of such a kind would increase the general ill-feeling. There was but one course to be pursued. The Government must purchase the contractor's stores for the Crown.' The Viceroy was helpless. The House of Commons was under the dictation of the mob. 'The situation of England was well understood, and they meant to take advantage of it.' He did not mean, he said, that 'the indulgences lately granted would fail ultimately of being useful consequences to

[1] 'Lord Hillsborough to the Earl of Buckinghamshire, February 6, 1780.'

the empire.' 'Barring insurrection or something nearly resembling it, he hoped to get through the remainder of the session without fresh collision.' But he could succeed only 'by closet interviews with independent members.'

'I tell these gentlemen,' he wrote, 'that however distressing a quarrel between the two kingdoms might be to England, it would necessarily be subversive of the Protestant interest here, and ruinous to Ireland. As they are pleased to allow me more merit than belongs to me, I tell them this consideration should have some little weight with them in pressing measures which must render the remainder of my life miserable. I state myself as pledged to his majesty for the gratitude and full satisfaction of Ireland. I have not, indeed, in my despatches risked such an assertion, but I thought in so particular an instance a slight deviation from fact meritorious.'[1]

March, 1780

The Cork contract did not stand alone. The successes of Paul Jones had fired the emulation of the Irish smugglers who had set up business on their own account. The visits of the American privateers were confined to the late spring and summer. The Irish were on the spot and could choose their own season. At the beginning of March two large cutters, the 'Black Prince' and the 'Black Princess,' showed themselves under French colours in the Irish Channel. They were Irish built and manned by Irish sailors. They had taken out commissions at Dunkirk, and, armed to the teeth,

[1] 'The Viceroy to Lord Hillsborough, February 17.'

occupied themselves in stopping the mail packets between Holyhead and Dublin, plundering the passengers, sinking the bags, and holding the vessels to ransom. The 'Princess' was the largest cutter ever seen on the coast,[1] long, black-sided, swift as a race-horse, and carrying eighteen nine-pounders. For four months these rovers remained masters of the Channel. Other minor craft started into similar activity. The Waterford and Milford packet was taken, 'our bishop's daughter on board,' and ransomed for 160 guineas. Waterford Harbour was practically blockaded. The merchants enquired ironically whether England had given them back their trade only to let it be destroyed by negligence: if this was the meaning of English sovereignty of the seas, the sooner it came to an end the better.[2]

The Viceroy described his situation as 'beyond measure disagreeable.' While affairs were going on thus fatuously out of doors, the Parliament was equally busy in adding to his sorrows. On the 1st of March the Irish Lords and Commons were invited to express by formal resolution their gratitude for the repeal of the trade laws. Mr. Grattan, supported by Yelverton, intimated that if much had been done more remained to be done. The spirit of Molyneux was awake again. Ireland was still in bondage, so long as she was bound by laws to which she had not herself consented. Poynings' Act must be modified. The Act passed in

[1] She was commanded by a man named MacCarty, of Newry.
[2] *Miscellaneous MSS.* S. P. O., March, April, May, and June, 1780.

England in the sixth year of George the First[1] must be repealed, and Ireland's birthright as a free nation must be at once restored to her.

The leap from regulations of trade to political independence was across a chasm too wide as yet for the nerves of the majority of the members. They could remember that England had just done what was right and liberal. They could see that constitutional questions ought not to be forced at the point of the bayonet. Even the Duke of Leinster thought the time improper for political agitation. Grattan had argued that Ireland was still at England's mercy, that what England had done England could undo, and as to the unsuitableness of the time England's difficulty was Ireland's opportunity. The House could not at the moment rise to the level of these high reasonings. The address of thanks was passed without an amendment. But the vision which Grattan had opened had set the Irish pulses tumultuously beating. He had led the country to its late victory. He perhaps understood the condition under which the millennium would be realized, though as yet it delayed to appear. He had Lord Charlemont and Lord Carysfort with him in the House of Peers. He had the Dublin mob with him outside

[1] This Act, round which so severe a battle was now to be fought, had originated in the Irish House of Peers having presumed to act as a Court of Ultimate Appeal. The Act declared 'that the King and Parliament of Great Britain had authority to bind the kingdom and people of Ireland;' and that the House of Lords in Ireland had no jurisdiction 'to affirm or reverse' any judgment given in the King's Courts of law there. 'All proceedings before the said House of Lords upon any such judgment were thereby declared to be null and void.'

the Parliament walls. His words were like the seeds sown by the Indian jugglers, which germinate in a night and are grown to fulness of stature on the morrow. Supported, as he believed, by the greater number of gentlemen of property, the Viceroy had perhaps not very judiciously confirmed Grattan's language by hinting that if Ireland was so inveterately troublesome the late concessions might be rescinded.[1] The Irish in vapouring about liberty were less unpractical than they seemed. They were not only determined to protect themselves against a reversal of the late legislation, but they aspired to independence, that they might hasten the revival of their manufactures by retaliating on England with protective duties. The orders of the Cabinet were to oppose constitutional changes with all the power of the Crown, and to prevent any proposition tending in that direction from being transmitted. The patriots had chosen their ground for the next attack. Grattan gave notice that on the 19th of April he would move 'a declaration of Rights.' Mr. Bushe moved on the 18th for leave at a later period to

April 19

[1] 'The epidemic madness so assiduously circulated by Lord Charlemont, Mr. Grattan and Lord Carysfort, does not prevail everywhere. Even Mr. Stuart, of Down (the first Lord Londonderry), is inclined to reason more temperately. Very limited indeed is the number of men of property who are not anxious to stifle ill-humour; but the temper of the inferior orders is in unpleasant fermentation. The tenour of my language is that England begins to feel an honest indignation at the absurd ingratitude of this kingdom; and that the seditious ideas propagated here must, instead of obtaining unreasonable and ruinous concessions, tend ultimately to the rescinding of the favours conferred.—Lord Buckinghamshire to Lord Hillsborough, March 8.'

bring in a Mutiny Bill. Grattan's motion was to try the principle. Bushe's motion applied it in a signal instance. In 1692 a Mutiny Bill had been offered by Lord Sidney to the first Parliament which met after the Revolution. It had been thrown out in a fit of ill-temper, and the Irish army had since been provided for under the Annual Act of Great Britain. Mr. Bushe's object was to reclaim for the Irish Parliament its suspended privileges.

1780

The Attorney-general opposed Bushe at the first stage. He protested against the imprudence of mooting so dangerous a question. He moved the adjournment of the House to get rid of it, and failed. Leave was given, and the Viceroy had to report that when the measure came on, the friends of Government meant to support it.

The day following Grattan opened his campaign in form, for the liberation of his country, and moved the two resolutions which became famous in Irish history.

1. The King, with the consent of the Parliament of Ireland, was alone competent to enact laws to bind Ireland.
2. Great Britain and Ireland were indissolubly united, but only under the tie of a common sovereign.

He spoke for two hours, and 'with the greatest warmth and enthusiasm.' He denounced the 6th of George I. as a general attack on the rights and liberties of Ireland. He appealed to the terms which had been

offered to America, to show how much might be extorted from England's fears if only demanded resolutely.

The Attorney-general had to reply at a disadvantage in a House which Grattan had made drunk with enthusiasm. He pointed out that the titles of half the estates in Ireland depended on British Acts of Parliament, and must become invalid if those Acts were declared unlawful. It was unnecessary, he said, it was inexpedient, ungrateful, even dangerous and injurious in a high degree, to agitate such questions. He moved the adjournment of the consideration of Grattan's resolution till September, equivalent to the English six months. The Attorney-general was supported by young Fitzgibbon,[1] who was now beginning to take part in the business of the House. So long as there were real grievances to be redressed, Fitzgibbon, careless of his professional prospects, had gone with the popular party. But none knew better than he, bred as he was from the very heart of the Irish people, the meaning of the revival of an Irish nationality. It meant a nationality not of the Irish Protestants, but of the Irish Catholic Celts. It meant, if successful, the undoing of the work of Elizabeth and James and Cromwell. It meant the overthrow of the Irish Church, and in some shape or other a struggle for the recovery of the lands.

Fitzgibbon's arguments sounded like foolishness. The House was in the humour of its predecessors in 1641, when analogous aspirations after liberty had been

[1] Afterwards Lord Clare, and Chancellor.

encouraged by England's embarrassment, but had issued in the massacre and the civil war. Very ominously a resolution of that Parliament was read out in the course of the debate, and was listened to with general applause.[1] Beyond the Attorney-general and Fitzgibbon not a member was found to defend the legislative authority of England. Flood and Hely Hutchinson only prevented the resolution from being carried by appealing to Irish generosity not to bear too heavily on England in her distress. The House adjourned without a division, and agreed that the proceedings should be passed over without being entered in the Journals.

It was 'with the utmost concern' that the Viceroy sent across an account of the debate.[2] There could no longer be a doubt that the Mutiny Bill would be carried. The English Act was indeed already treated as of no authority. Deserters from the army committed to prison under it were released by the magistrates. The Privy Council told the Viceroy that after the discussion of the 19th neither magistrates nor juries would enforce in Ireland a law passed by the British Parliament. The *Freeman's Journal* announced that the inclusion of Ireland in the British Mutiny Act was a step towards establishing a tyranny. The soldiers were invited to

---

[1] 'It is voted upon question, *nullo contradicente*, that the subjects of this his majesty's kingdom are a free people, and to be governed only according to the common law of England, and statutes made and established in this kingdom of Ireland, and according to the lawful customs used in the same.'—*Commons' Journals*, July 26, 1641.

[2] 'The Viceroy to Lord Hillsborough, April 20, 1780.'

leave their colours, and the gentry were warned against arresting them at their own peril.

Mr. Bushe's motion was fixed for the 8th of May. On the 7th the Viceroy summoned the Council; he informed them that his orders from England were to resist, and asked their opinions. The attendance was larger than usual, and the answer was all but unanimous. Agar, the Archbishop of Cashel, was for standing out. All the rest, English-born as well as Irish-born, the Chancellor, and the Duke of Leinster, Foster, Pery, Hutchinson, agreed that the British Mutiny Act could not be enforced in Ireland, and that the army would fall to pieces unless the Government consented to let Mr. Bushe's motion pass. Opposition could have no effect but to show the weakness of the English party. 1780

This was not all. Private Members of Parliament wrote to protest against opposing it on the ground of the consequences to themselves from the support which they had given to the Government already. British authority rested on the army. The army without an Irish Mutiny Bill must disintegrate, and they would be sacrificed to the fury of the people.[1]

Finding himself deserted on so vital a measure, the Viceroy could only ask for time to learn the Cabinet's pleasure. When the motion came on, the Attorney-

[1] '"We have resisted popular questions, and exposed ourselves to the indignation of the people at large by supporting Government; but who is to defend us against their resentment, if the army, from the doubts now circulated, should be dissolved?"—Extract of letter enclosed by the Viceroy to Lord Hillsborough, May 8, 1780.'

General applied to have it postponed for a fortnight, and with difficulty obtained the House's consent, almost every one telling him that he would vote for it when finally brought in. Some members even in their places declared they would not, either as jurors or magistrates, 'suffer the British Mutiny law to be acted upon.'

'The whole tenour of the debate,' Lord Buckinghamshire said, 'leaves no room for doubt that few inferior magistrates will dare—if they were so disposed, as they are not—to act under that Mutiny law. Whether their opinion is right or wrong, the effect is the same, our best friends being of opinion that opposition will but rekindle the flame. We can offer in the House of Commons but a vain and embarrassing resistance. It will pass the Council also, and if rejected here it can only be by my refusing to certify.'[2]

Past experience had led the Cabinet to believe that the Irish meant less than they said. They set down much of what the Viceroy reported to them as braggadocio. Their orders remained as before. If Mr. Bushe's motion was so framed as to imply that the British Act was not in force in Ireland, Lord Buckinghamshire was to oppose it at every stage. Being made of weak materials, however, and evidently unwilling to interpose his sole authority, he was informed that if, in spite of his efforts, the Bill passed the Privy Council, 'his majesty would spare him an unusual step,' and that he might transmit it to England.[1]

[1] 'To Lord Hillsborough, May 1.'

[2] 'Lord Hillsborough to the Viceroy, May 14.'

The fortnight passed away. On the 21st of May the Council was again assembled. The Viceroy laid before them the Cabinet's directions. He told them that if the heads of Mr. Bushe's Bill were carried, he apprehended they would be laid before the Parliament in England. He did not expect the servants of the Crown to vote against the motion. He did expect them not to vote against the Government.

Finding the Cabinet more resolute than they expected, the Patriots modified their purpose. Having talked so loudly, they were forced to proceed; but when Mr. Bushe produced his Bill, it was found to have been so drawn as to avoid a distinct affirmation that the British Act did not apply to Ireland. The language could be construed into an expression of anxiety, that the law existing already should be more efficiently executed. Even thus modified, the Attorney-General said he must oppose the introduction of any Bill whatsoever upon the subject. A division was forced, and he was heavily defeated. The heads were passed rapidly through the two Houses. The progress through the Council was obstructed, but was accomplished at last, and the Bill was transmitted to England at the beginning of July.

Again there was a pause, as there had been at the beginning of the session when the ultimatum was sent over on Free-trade. The excitement, however, was now far greater, the hopes entertained more ambitious, the general feeling more irritated. The army was a peculiarly sore subject. The towns on

July, 1780

the coast, in fear real or pretended of the privateers, beset the Castle with demands for protection. Angry motions were made in the House of Lords. If Ireland was a part of the British Empire, Ireland it was said had a right to be defended; while the handful of Government troops remaining in the country were demoralized by the invitations to the soldiers to desert and the impunity allowed to desertion.

To assist England in coming to a resolution, and to let the Cabinet understand what it was with which they would really have to reckon, the Volunteers became confessed politicians. The Duke of Leinster took the chair while the Dublin corps passed resolutions that Ireland should be free. Ireland would make her own laws in her own Parliament, and obey no others. The Volunteers as Ireland's champion army intended to have it so. As if to assert in the most distinct manner that they owed no obedience to the Castle, and would accept no orders from it, they elected their own commander-in-chief; and Lord Charlemont, the most amiable, the most enthusiastic, the most feeble of revolutionary heroes, allowed himself to wear the title of General of the Patriot Army of Ireland.

These displays were visibly connected with the plan too successfully pursued to weaken and demoralize the British regiments. As if to contrast their own brilliant condition with the shrivelled numbers and shattered discipline of the regular troops, they proceeded, while the Mutiny Act was under consideration in England, to

hold reviews in the North. Lord Charlemont went down accompanied by Grattan, who was now on every man's lip as the liberator of his country. The half Americanised artisans of Belfast and Newry, officered by attorneys and shopkeepers, glittered glorious in their new uniforms. Ireland was free; Ireland was a nation. The strings long silent of the Irish harp were sounding in the breeze; the green flag was blowing out with the emblem blazoned on its folds, 'Hibernia tandem libera,' Ireland at length free: free with the help of the arms which had been begged at the gate of Dublin Castle; free from the fell authority which, notwithstanding its stupid tyranny and still more stupid negligence, had given Ireland its laws and its language, had prevented its inhabitants from destroying each other like howling and hungry wolves, and at least enabled them to exist; —free from this, but not free from sloth and ignorance, from wild imaginations, from political dishonesty which had saturated the tissue of her being, and required stronger medicine to purge it than the shouting of 50,000 volunteers.

No doubt, however, the spectacle was imposing. The English Whigs sent their deputies to applaud and admire. Lord Camden, whose son was to learn by and by the real meaning of these fine doings, came over as Lord Charlemont's guest, to make speeches about America, to bid the Volunteers remember that England would never forgive them, to tell them that they must stand to their arms or they were lost. All was rapture —bearded men falling into one another's arms as

brothers, in radiant tears, swearing that they would be free or die; bowing before Grattan as before a saviour newly sent from heaven; and hearing from Grattan's lips the delightful assurance that theirs was the spirit which made liberty secure.

But the last battle of the session had still to be fought, and the Liberator had to descend once more into the arena. August came, bringing with it the heads of Bills which had been sent to England. The Mutiny Bill was among them. Some concession even on this point the Cabinet had been driven to make, but it was returning in a form deemed as insulting as it was injurious. The right of the Irish Parliament had been allowed, but allowed for once only. In England the Mutiny Bill was annual. The heads of Mr. Bushe's Bill made it biennial. The limitation of time had been struck out, and the duration assigned to it in the Bill as corrected by the Cabinet was perpetual.

August, 1780

Rumour had been already busy with the report of the intended atrocity. Grattan, fresh from the tented field and the adulations of the Volunteers, gave notice that if the change had been made he would oppose the Bill in any shape; the King should have no army in Ireland. When the House seemed to hesitate he threatened that if he was not supported he would secede from Parliament and appeal to the people. The fact proving true, he moved to restore the expunged clause—a motion equivalent to rejection, as the Bill must have been lost for the year. He was beaten by a

large majority.[1] The Perpetual Mutiny Bill became law, and he did *not* secede. Irishmen sometimes say more on such matters than they mean. But in fact his assistance was required on another subject scarcely less important. The Supply Bill had returned also, and also, like its companion, altered. No sooner had the Irish trade been opened than the forcing system was at once to be applied to it. Ireland had suffered for a century under English monopolies. It was now Ireland's turn. She was allowed, under the new regulations, to import raw sugar from the West Indies on the same terms as Great Britain. But free trade was to no purpose if England was allowed to conspire in another form against Ireland's prosperity by underselling the Irish sugar manufacturers in their own market. They had included in the Supply Bill a protection duty against British loaf-sugar, and this duty the English Council had refused to sanction.

Had the Irish people been capable of reflection, they would have perceived that England was really protecting the Irish consumer from his own countrymen. In ordinary times even the cry of English treachery would not have betrayed them into an illusion so absurd as that under which they fell: but in the delirium of imagined liberty they had parted with their senses. They could see only that England, unable to encounter them by force, was insidiously stealing back from them their victory.

---

[1] 114 to 62.

Dissatisfied with the vote on the Mutiny Bill, distrusting Parliament therefore, and responding, as it were, to Grattan's appeal, the Volunteers of Dublin assembled as supreme arbiters of Irish policy, and announced their pleasure and their sentiments. In a series of resolutions they declared that the alteration of the Sugar Bill and the passing of the Perpetual Mutiny Bill rendered the expectation of free trade delusive, and contradicted the sentiments which they had believed would actuate the representatives of the people to emancipate the kingdom from the insult of a foreign judicature. The army was to be made the instrument of despotism to violate the liberties of Ireland. The Irish House of Commons had adopted the sentiments of the British Privy Council in contradiction to their own sentiments. Such complaisance was unconstitutional; and therefore they, the Volunteers of Dublin, announced that they would not support the interest or protect the property of any member who had voted with the ministry on the late division; and that they would concur with the Volunteers of the rest of the kingdom in every effort which might tend to avert the dangers with which they were threatened.

A committee was appointed to correspond with the different corps on the measures which it might be necessary to take, and delegates were invited to meet, 'to animate the kingdom to rise in support of the violated rights of Ireland, and the privileges which their treacherous representatives had basely sold to the infamous administration of Great Britain.'

This singular commentary on the political capacity of Ireland's new masters, and on the effects of concessions however just in themselves to Irish agitation, was printed in the *Hibernian Journal*, and as a practical consequence a spirit showed itself of the most ferocious hostility to the British regiments who were quartered in the large towns. Patriot ruffians whose hands were practised in cattle houghing used their knives in slitting the tendons of English soldiers who might be walking carelessly in the streets; and the local juries adopted as their own these detestable atrocities by acquitting the perpetrators when taken in the act.[1] The soldiers, finding justice refused them in the courts, took the remedy into their own hands. In Dublin and Galway there were angry spurts of fighting. In Cashel one of these villains was killed on the spot by the comrade of a man whom he had maimed.

On the members of Parliament, so rapid a development of patriotism, coupled with the insults of the Volunteers to themselves, produced for a time a sobering effect. Already alarmed by the rate at which Grattan was advancing, they were not reassured by the visible breaking loose of Irish devilry. The Supply Bill was passed notwithstanding the outcry on the Sugar duties. Mr. Peter La Touche, who had taken the chair at one of the Volunteer meetings, was called before the Privy Council and apologized. The publications in the *Hibernian Journal* were brought before the September, 1780

[1] *MSS. Ireland*, 1780. S.P.O. So far this practice was carried that an Act of Parliament was passed in the following session to repress it.

House of Commons, and the Volunteers' resolutions were condemned as false, scandalous, and libellous, and tending to raise sedition.

Thus were the chequered days of the closing session gilded with a show of loyalty. Lord Hillsborough described the doings of the Volunteers as 'the convulsions of expiring faction;' the Government was soothed into a belief that the worst was over; and business being now completed, the harassed Viceroy had arrived in port, with the one duty left to the House and to himself, to part with mutual congratulations.

'The satisfaction of Ireland at the prospect opening before it might equal,' Lord Buckinghamshire said, 'though it could not exceed, the glow of his private feelings. The commerce of the kingdom was now established on an extended and lasting basis, and future generations would look back to the present Parliament and the diffusive indulgence of his majesty with grateful veneration. The Lords and Commons, when they returned to their counties, would impress on all ranks of men the blessings of the situation, and would invite them to an industry without which the bounties of nature were lavished in vain.' [1]

Platitude could scarcely have been carried further. November, 1780 The insincere illusion disappeared before the closing speech of the Viceroy was in the columns of the weekly journals. Finding Parliament so unpatriotic as to sacrifice the Sugar duties, the freemen of Dublin met, with the High Sheriff in the chair, and

[1] *Comm.ns' Journals*, September 2, 1780.

resolved as before that 'non-importation' was more beneficial to them than a nominal free trade. They would, therefore, neither themselves import nor consume, nor would deal with any tradesman who ventured to import, manufactured goods from Great Britain.

King William's statue was the scene of a new demonstration on the 4th of November, not as in the year preceding, with cannon wheeled about its base and Volunteers parading, but now decorated with saddened emblems—Hibernia weeping over the words Liberty and Commerce, and a scroll expressing a hope 'that the virtuous resistance of America might prove a lesson to the British Ministry.' 1780

To Lord Buckinghamshire the autumn brought indisputable satisfaction. His own inglorious reign came to an end. Before his departure he had to wind up the accounts of his term of office.

It was not by appeals to manly or honourable motives that he had secured the majorities which saved his administration from disgrace and the British army from dissolution. The sublime impulses which had governed the opening months of the session had grown feeble at its close, and the usual detestable list of aspirants for rank or pension was forwarded for the Cabinet's consideration.

'No man,' the Viceroy said, in apology for the numbers whom he was reluctantly obliged to recommend, 'can see the inconveniences of increasing the number of peers more forcibly than myself; but the recommendation of many of the persons submitted to

his majesty for that honour arose from engagements taken up at the press of the moment, to secure questions on which the English Government was very particularly anxious. I feel the same about Privy Council and pensions, and I had not contracted any absolute agreement of recommendations either to peerage or pension till difficulties arose that occasioned so much anxiety in his majesty's Cabinet, that I must have been culpable in neglecting any possible means of securing a majority in the House of Commons.' [1]

The applicants for favours [2] were so abundant that some of them after all were disappointed. The fondness of the Irish for titles was like the fondness of women and savages for feathers and fine clothes, and the refusal was the more bitter because Irish opinion was lenient to the apostate patriot who secured a handsome price for his delinquency, but had no pardon for the dupe who allowed himself to be cheated of his reward.

Viceroys unable to redeem their engagements were thus liable, in their own persons or their secretaries', to be called to account by these exasperated politicians. A promise given to secure a vote could not be formally pleaded, and was thus treated as a debt of honour. Lord Buckinghamshire had been tempted, in a moment of embarrassment, into a negotiation with Sir Henry

---

[1] 'The Earl of Buckinghamshire to Lord Hillsborough, November 19, 1780.'

[2] The names of some of them will be found in a letter from Lord Buckinghamshire to Lord North. Printed in Grattan's *Life of Grattan*, vol. ii. p. 166, &c.

Cavendish, a noted free-lance in the House of Commons. Sir Henry had applied for a place on the Privy Council. Lord Buckinghamshire had answered that 'the Privy Council was but a feather;' 'he would do better than that for him;' and when reminded of his words, again promised to provide for his importunate suitor 'before he left the kingdom.' On the faith of these assurances Sir Henry had voted steadily with the Government. Time passed on; the day of Lord Buckinghamshire's departure was approaching, and nothing had been done. Sir Henry wrote to say he would not insult his excellency by the suggestion that he meant to evade his engagement. He appealed to the Viceroy's honour. He reminded him of his exact expressions. 'Had any common prostitute in office made such declarations to him,' he said, 'his experience would have been an antidote to deception, but the word of the Earl of Buckinghamshire he regarded as truth itself.'

To this letter the Viceroy sent no reply. Sir Henry waited till he was on the point of sailing, and then addressed him again in the following words:—

'My Lord,—On the 22nd of last September I did myself the honour to write to your excellency, but have not had the honour of an answer. I am not conscious of having merited that silent contempt. Your excellency, on perusing my letter, must have perceived that you have deceived and injured me. I earnestly entreat a satisfactory answer whilst your excellency shall

continue in Ireland, that I may not be under the necessity of demanding one on the other side of the water.

'I am,
'Your Excellency's most obedient and
humble servant,
'H. CAVENDISH.'

'To his Excellency
the Lord-Lieutenant.'

Lord Weymouth, to whom Lord Buckinghamshire forwarded this characteristic communication, submitted it to Wallace, the English Attorney-general, with a view to prosecution. The Attorney-general replied that Sir Henry at worst had been guilty only of a misdemeanour in Ireland, for which he could not be prosecuted in England. In Ireland the scandal of exposure would be certain—a conviction would be extremely uncertain. The matter dropped, and Sir Henry was left in possession of the field with the satisfaction of having at least saved his reputation, though he lost his promised promotion.

CHAPTER II.

THE CONSTITUTION OF 1782.

SECTION I.

THE embarrassments of England presented an opportunity to the maritime nations of Europe too tempting to be resisted. She had affected the sovereignty of the seas. She had asserted a supremacy which galled their pride and irritated their jealousy. Her enemies and her rivals chose the moment of the revolt of the American provinces to humiliate her. It seemed as if the whole world was about to combine to disgrace and ruin the single island which on the map of the globe appears but a small appendage of the continent, divided from it by a thread of water. Spain was snatching at Gibraltar, and France at revenge for her own expulsion from Canada and India. The fame of England's difficulties had reached her Eastern empire, and she was threatened with a rebellion in Hindostan. At this crisis it pleased Catherine of Russia to strike into the quarrel, and to invite the sea powers which were not yet at war to form a league for the protection

1780

of the rights of neutrals—the right among others of supplying England's enemies with munitions of war.

Into this league Holland now entered. Russia confined herself to intrigue. Holland made her possessions in the West Indies a depôt of supplies for the French and Spaniards and Americans. She became as actively mischievous as if she had directly taken part in the conflict; and England, finding remonstrances unheeded, and preferring an open foe to a treacherous neutral, declared war against the Dutch. Thus, without an ally left to her but Portugal, she found herself matched against the three most considerable naval powers of the world next to herself, who each, at one time or another, had encountered her single-handed, and whose combination was rendered doubly dangerous by the support of the American privateers.

That the Protestant colony in Ireland should select this particular moment to threaten a rebellion was not generous on their part, nor particularly glorious; but it was not unnatural, and ought not to have been unexpected. The commercial monopolies were unjust; they had existed so long that their inherent iniquity was no longer perceived. In surrendering them the English had made a sacrifice of pride and interest which, they conceived, entitled them to gratitude; but concessions extorted by agitation have never been followed by gratitude since the world began, and do not in fact deserve it. Under English rule Ireland had been demoralized and made miserable. The Anglo-Irish colonists might naturally suppose that if left to manage their own affairs

they would manage them better. To manage them worse might fairly be thought impossible.

And yet there were circumstances in their past history which, if they had reflected, might have taught them caution. They were aliens, planted by conquest among a people who, though in chains and outwardly submissive, had neither forgotten nor forgiven their subjection. Three times already their ancestors or their predecessors, tempted by analogous wrongs, had turned against the mother country, and had united with the Irish nation in a demand for self-government. On each of these occasions their aspirations had recoiled upon themselves, and the result had been a fresh conquest, with worse miseries attending it than those which they had hoped to escape. The Norman families combined with the Celts to resist the Reformation. Of the descendants of the Normans more than half perished in the wars of Elizabeth, while the Celts, in the horrors of famine, were driven to feed on one another. The Scotch and English Protestants planted by James the First were provoked by Strafford and the bishops into joining with the Irish when England's hands were tied by the quarrel between the King and the Parliament. The result was a furious attempt at their own extermination at the hands of their Irish allies, and they recovered their estates and their homes only when Cromwell and an English army reconquered the island for them. A third time, in another form, the phenomenon repeated itself. In the reaction from Puritan ascendancy the Anglo-Irish nobles and gentry became violent Jacobites

and High Churchmen. They preferred the Catholic Celts to the Presbyterian Scots, and by playing into the Catholics' hands enabled Tyrconnell to establish a Catholic Government. When the Celts were once more in the saddle they found themselves involved in the common proscription which refused to make distinctions among Protestants. A third time England was reluctantly driven to interfere in their behalf, and replace the supremacy in their hands. She beat the Celts upon their knees, and flung them into chains; but disgusted with the ungrateful service, she threw Celt and colonist alike under disabilities which would prevent them from giving further trouble, and left the country to its fate. This, too, was not to answer to England. Strong nations trusted with empire over their weaker neighbours are not allowed to leave their duties undone. Anarchy and wretchedness had again produced mutiny and discontent, and the Protestant colonists were once more dreaming of separation and a revival of Irish nationality.

The question what that nationality was to be they scarcely cared in their present heat to consider: but that it was a very serious question was obvious to all but themselves. Were some half million Protestants—for the Established Church contained no more, and Churchmen so far monopolized power and privilege—were half a million Protestants to remain a Spartan aristocracy, surrounded by a population of helots six times outnumbering them, whose lands they had occupied?

Lord Charlemont and many another enthusiastic

patriot saw no difficulty in this. He would perhaps have levelled the distinction between Churchman and Nonconformist Protestant. The Catholics—though he was in favour of extending their civil rights to the utmost—Charlemont never dreamt of admitting to political power, and believed it would be possible to keep them excluded.

Grattan, farther sighted than Charlemont, saw early that an Irish nationality, from which the Irish themselves were shut out, was a paradox and an absurdity. Experience of the ductile character of the existing Parliament showed him that, while its composition was unchanged, self-government would be no more than a name. He persuaded himself that distinction of religion was worn out, that animosities of race could be extinguished in a common enthusiasm, that Celt and Saxon might stand side by side in the ranks, and present a common front to the British oppressor. Like other eager statesmen, he regarded the lessons of the past as no longer applicable. If it was hinted that when the Celt had his foot within the Constitution, when he saw the usurpers of his estates and the oppressors of his creed at the mercy of his superior numbers, he might revive the aspirations of 1690, Grattan replied only with disdain or with misleading metaphors. The Celts, as he saw them, were spiritless and broken, the peasantry cringing before the Protestant squires, or, when they were kindly dealt with, loyal and affectionate. He saw the Catholic clergy in appearance humbly grateful for the suspension of laws which if executed would have

forbidden them to exist. That in such a people as this, there would be danger to the Protestant gentry, who, besides other advantages, had now their own army of volunteers, was an idea too preposterous to be entertained. 'Are we,' he asked, 'to be a Protestant settlement or an Irish nation?' and in his answer to his question he exposed the measure of his foresight.

'The Penal Code,' he said, 'is the shell in which Protestant power has been hatched. It has become a bird. It must burst the shell or perish in it. Indulgence to Catholics cannot injure the Protestant religion. That religion is the religion of the State, and will become the religion of Catholics if severity does not prevent them.'

Piece by piece the shell has been broken off. Has the Protestant bird developed power of wing in consequence? Do the Catholics seem any more to admire it? Let us look for answer in the Disestablished Church, in the obliteration of the Protestants in Ireland as a political power in the country, in the reduction of the Viceroy into a registrar of the decrees of the Vatican, and the boast of a cardinal that Irish nationality is the Catholic religion.

Mr. Grattan was dazzled by his own brilliancy. He believed, or he affected to believe, that liberty, like the spell of an enchanter, could form a Legislature of pure and high-minded statesmen out of the Peers and Commons, with whose motives of action he was by this time familiar; and that out of the discordant and motley elements which formed the population of Ireland he

could create a united, noble, and self-reliant people. If, besides these high flights of imagination, any more earthly and practical thoughts presented themselves, he may have believed that the day of England's greatness was over, that her star was setting, and for ever, and that his free Ireland might find an ally less dangerous to her liberties and equally convenient for her protection either in France or in her sister colony across the Atlantic.

SECTION II.

1780 So far as the realization of the hopes of the Irish patriots depended on the progress of the war, the events of the year 1780 were on the whole unfavourable to them. Though the Irish Channel was the hunting-ground of privateers, and bishops' daughters were captured and held to ransom between Waterford and Milford, England still presented an unbroken front to her many enemies. The Spaniards had blockaded Gibraltar in the belief that they would starve out the garrison. Sir George Rodney, with a relieving fleet, seized a convoy of Spanish provision-ships in the spring, and fed General Elliot and his troops out of the stores of the enemy. In July he encountered the Spanish Admiral Don Juan de Langara at Cape St. Vincent, destroyed seven out of eleven of his ships, and carried Don Juan himself a prisoner into the blockaded fortress.

Nor had the alliance with France brought that immediate triumph to the American provinces which sanguine patriots anticipated. M. de Ternay arrived at Rhode Island in July with fifteen ships of the line, bringing with him the Count de Rochambeau and six thousand men as the vanguard of a larger force which was to follow. France was preparing to put out her utmost strength, yet M. de Ternay let Admiral Arbuth-

not blockade him with an inferior fleet, and the French contingent lay locked-up and useless.

The capture of Charleston had been followed by the complete submission of the Carolinas. Sir Henry Clinton held New York in strength, against which Washington could do nothing; and the unexpected protraction of the war, which had seemed as good as ended, brought despondency and mutiny into the American camp. General Arnold, who had headed the expedition into Canada, the most distinguished after Washington of the patriot commanders, believed the cause to be lost. He opened a correspondence with Clinton, proposed to betray West Point to him, and with West Point the control of the Hudson. The plot was discovered. Arnold escaped into the English lines. Major André, Clinton's aide-de-camp, through whom the negotiation was carried on, was taken and hanged. But the disappointment did not materially alter the prospects of the contending parties. Arnold published a defence of his desertion, in which he pretended that England by her concessions had removed the occasion of the quarrel, and that under no circumstances would he be a party to the French alliance or assist in betraying the mother country to her hereditary enemy. Having returned to his allegiance, he took active service under Clinton, and led an expeditionary force into Virginia, which at first carried all before it. In January, 1781, the American army almost dissolved for want of pay, and but for the timely arrival of a subsidy from France, would have been unable to offer opposition in the field

1781

in any part of the Continent to the British divisions. The supply of money gave new spirit to the cause. Washington re-equipped his troops. La Fayette went down to Virginia with part of the French army to oppose Arnold. De Ternay broke the blockade, and made his way to the Chesapeake with the rest, intending to co-operate. Still the balance wavered. Arbuthnot pursued him and fought an action which, though indecisive, disabled him from proceeding. The French fleet returned to Rhode Island, General Phillips carried reinforcements to Arnold, and in March, 1781, Washington's own State, notwithstanding La Fayette, remained in possession of the British.

The Dutch, too, were paying dear for having thrust themselves into a quarrel which was none of theirs. No sooner was war declared against them than Rodney seized St. Eustatius, the most important of their West India islands, where they had accumulated enormous stores for shipment to America. Ships, factories, warehouses, all were taken. Three millions' worth of property was captured or destroyed.

From India, too, came cheering news. Sir Eyre Coote twice defeated Hyder Ali. Warren Hastings was triumphing in spite of France and Mysore, and passionate philanthropists at home.

The French, finding the work less easy than they expected, began to hint at peace; and it was felt painfully by all parties that unless some combined and vigorous effort could be made, and made at once, Saratoga would be a barren triumph, and Bunker's Hill and

Lexington would have been fought in vain. England, too, was strained to the utmost of her power. Lord George Germaine, her Minister at War, was incompetent beyond the average of Parliamentary administrators. The waste had been enormous. The national debt was piling up into a mountain, and the simultaneous requirements of India, Gibraltar, and the Navy, rendered it a hard task to keep Clinton properly reinforced. One more attempt should be made, at any rate. In the summer of 1780 the united French and Spanish fleets—thirty-six sail of the line in all—had sailed for the West Indies, with a view of taking Jamaica, and then of attacking Clinton at New York. Heat and overcrowding had brought disease. They returned, having done nothing. In 1781 the two fleets sailed again under Count de Grasse. Jamaica, as before, was to be their first object; but, whether successful at Jamaica or not, de Grasse was to assist Washington and De Rochambeau in a grand attack by sea and land upon New York. If the attack was successful, it would conclude the war. If it failed, France would probably have declined to pursue the adventure further, and fortune this time was more favourable than the most sanguine hopes could have anticipated.

Lord Cornwallis, who had served in America from the beginning of the war, still commanded in the Carolinas, which he was endeavouring to bring to formal submission. The Americans, unable since the defeat at Camden to meet the British in the field, were able to harass their marches, surprise isolated detachments, and

maintain a spirited if irregular resistance. Cornwallis found himself unable, with all his exertions, to restore a regular government, or unite the loyal part of the inhabitants of those states. The defeat of General Tarleton at Cow Pens was none the less a serious blow that it was due to carelessness and over-confidence. The small number of troops engaged on both sides were lost in the enormous territory for which they were contending, and the soldiers wasted away in profitless marches and malaria. Finding it necessary to attempt something more effective, the English General determined, though with no very definite object, on a bold adventure. He proposed to establish a communication with Arnold in Virginia, and place a line of military posts between Charleston and Petersburgh. He took the field at the beginning of March, 1781, with some misgiving, but on the whole sanguine. He inflicted a severe defeat on General Greene on the 15th at Guildford, and leaving Lord Rawdon[1] to keep order in South Carolina, he moved on himself to Wilmington. American armies recovered quickly from their losses. Greene doubled back in his rear, and though again defeated on the 19th of April, forced Rawdon afterwards into Charleston, and picked up the detachments which Cornwallis had left to keep open his communications. As Burgoyne had been cut off from Lake Champlain, so Cornwallis was now separated from his base of supplies in South Carolina, and was forced to push forward with his best speed into Virginia. He reached Petersburgh

[1] Earl of Moira afterwards.

on the 20th of May, where he found Arnold. Clinton had sent him 1500 men from New York, which raised his entire numbers to 7000. He was more than a match in the field for any power which La Fayette could then bring against him; and as long as the sea was open and the English were masters of it, he was in no danger of a want of supplies. But he confessed himself 'totally in the dark' as to what he was generally to do; he was 'weary of marching about the country in quest of adventure,'[1] and was anxious for orders from New York. 'Orders' were what Clinton was just then unable to give; he had just heard that de Grasse had sailed, and that he was himself in danger of being attacked by sea and land. He had not another man to spare; he therefore recommended Cornwallis to occupy some strong position on the coast, where he would be within reach, and hold himself ready to embark for New York. Such vague directions were not of happy omen. Cornwallis, however, obeyed, and entrenched himself at Yorktown, in Virginia, where the York river runs into the Chesapeake, waiting for the arrival of a promised English squadron.

No English General can believe himself in danger when he is touching the sea. For once, through a combination of accidents, England was found wanting in her own peculiar domain. The English squadron never reached the Chesapeake, but de Grasse and the French and Spaniards came instead of it. Rodney had

[1] 'Lord Cornwallis to Sir Henry Clinton, April 10, 1780.'—*Cornwallis Despatches*, vol. i. p. 87.

gone to England with the spoils of St. Eustatius, and had not returned to his station. De Grasse, when he arrived with the combined fleet of France and Spain, found himself stronger than any force which England could at that moment bring into line on the American coast. Admiral Graves came down with the ships lying at New York, and with a far inferior force ventured an engagement. He was not defeated, but he suffered heavily, and was obliged to draw off, while de Grasse closed the mouth of the net in which Cornwallis was by this time enclosed.[1]

Washington, joined by the French at Rhode Island, instead of attacking New York, had pushed down by forced marches into Virginia. Escape by sea was impossible. There were a few days in which, before the lines of investment were drawn close about him, Cornwallis might have at least attempted to escape the fate impending on him. Before Washington arrived on the scene he was still superior to La Fayette. By an instant and rapid movement he might have broken through, perhaps have effected a retreat to Carolina, or even with exceptional daring have cut his way by land through Pennsylvania. But Cornwallis, though a brave and solid general, was without the qualities of genius which are needed for sudden emergencies. Half his men had sickened from the unhealthy vapours of the York river, and if he moved he must have left his sick behind him. Clinton misled him by cheering messages that help might be looked for, and he continued to wait

[1] August 20.

for its coming till Washington had drawn his lines across the neck of the Peninsula on which the British were lying, and with 10,000 Americans and 7000 French completed the blockade. Under these conditions Lord Cornwallis did what might have been expected from an honourable man of sense and integrity. He held his ground till the enemies' trenches had been pushed close, and their cannon searched every corner of the British encampment. When further resistance was impossible, and the result of prolonging the struggle could have been only a useless sacrifice of brave men's lives, the American war was brought on the 19th of October to its virtual close, by the second surrender of an English General and an English army.

SECTION III.

The Earl of Carlisle and Mr. Eden,[1] the unsuccessful commissioners to America, were selected to succeed Lord Buckinghamshire and Sir R. Heron, as Viceroy and Secretary at Dublin Castle. Four years of such ungrateful service tried the patience of the most enduring public servants, each Viceroy finding the post more difficult, and the shifts more detestable, by which alone the Government could be carried on. After Lord Buckinghamshire's departure the Volunteers, who now looked on themselves as the real rulers of the country, chose a second Legislature of their own. They passed resolutions condemning the House of Commons. They clamoured against the refusal of the sugar duties. They saw in the Perpetual Mutiny Bill a base surrender of the liberties of Ireland. The language in which they expressed their views was of the choicest Hibernian type, and the patriotic newspapers which reported their proceedings were filling their columns with outpourings of mere treason. Prosecutions were talked of; but the Leinster corps interspersing their politics with reviews and displays of force, prudence was stronger than valour.

1781

The aristocracy, many of whom had taken a lead at the beginning of the movement, were frightened at the power which they had created. 'Wild notions of

[1] Afterwards Lord Auckland.

Republicanism' were abroad—borrowed from America; vague ideas of rights of man, not yet thrown into shape by Tom Paine, but seething and fermenting in the Presbyterian blood in the north. Lord Carlisle, after a month's experience, reported a conviction growing 'among a variety of men of the greatest weight in the kingdom,' 'that for their own security they must support the English Government,' that 'the power must be regained from the people which, if it remained in their hands, would be the ruin of the State.'[1] Concession which was to have made Ireland eternally loyal, had resulted in 'the obliteration of respect essential to Government from the minds of the people.' Free trade was to have been 'a horn of plenty.' It occurred to no one that trade could not grow, like a mushroom, in a night. The expected plenty was still absent, and the people 'were taught to believe' that it was still British legislation which forbade the fountain to flow.[2] 'The men of the greatest weight,' too, though they feared what was coming and wished Government to exert itself, did not care to compromise themselves by public action. In revolutions the centre of gravity changes. The privileged orders feel dimly that their consequence is passing from them. They are in the presence of forces which they do not understand and fear to encounter. Lord Carlisle complained that 'the higher classes stood aloof from him;' while discontent grew louder, and the

[1] 'The Earl of Carlisle to Lord Hillsborough, January 29, 1781.' S. P. O.

[2] 'To Lord Hillsborough, March 29, 1782.' A retrospective letter.

Volunteers, more and more disdaining disguise, spoke of themselves as the defenders of the country 'against foreign and domestic enemies'—the domestic enemy 'being the Parliament of Great Britain and the supporters of the Government in Ireland.' [1]

If this state of things was scarcely tolerable in the recess, it would necessarily be infinitely worse when the period arrived for the Irish Legislature to re-assemble. Repeal of Poynings' Act, repeal of the 6th of George the First, a bill of rights, and none could say how many more such bills, were preparing in Grattan's laboratory, and would have to be met in the midst of a universal hubbub, under the muskets of the Volunteers, now said to number a hundred thousand. Hillsborough, when the Viceroy consulted him, advised a free use of 'secret service money.' But where in Ireland did a subterranean Pactolus flow? Lord Carlisle, or Mr. Eden for him, replied in sorrow, 'that he could take no money from the Irish treasury without accounting for it.' Ireland having no foreign relations 'he had no constitutional pretext of foreign service;' 'and the mischief,' he pathetically said, 'which had long resulted from this was not to be described.' 'In the present state of the country the wise application of 3000*l.* a year might be of a degree of importance to his majesty's affairs beyond what words could estimate.' There was in fact but one resource. He must be supplied from England. 'Lord Carlisle must be permitted to draw on Mr. Robinson for sums to be applied to his majesty's service and the

[1] 'To Lord Hillsborough, March 29, 1782.' A retrospective letter.

effective conduct of Government: Lord North, in return, might expect an ample compensation to his majesty by grant or pension from Ireland at a proper time to such persons as his majesty would otherwise provide for from his English revenue.'[1]

As the summer advanced the aspect grew steadily darker. Every ship that England could spare from her home defences was in the West Indies or at New York, or relieving Gibraltar, or watching the Dutch. Ireland, so anxious to relieve England of her internal garrison, provided no volunteers upon the water. The mouth of Waterford Harbour was held by a fleet of privateers, who lay undisturbed there, preying upon the passing vessels. When it was rumoured that the French meant to send an expedition against Cork, a few volunteers offered their services. The offer, it will be seen, came to nothing, though the Government received it as well meant, and as indicating feelings not utterly disloyal.

By September the patriots had laid out the plan of their campaign. An attack was to be made on Poynings' Act; the biennial clause was to be restored to the Mutiny Bill; and to counterbalance the declaratory Act of the 6th of George the First, Mr. Grattan meant to move a Declaration of Parliamentary Independence. On Poynings' Act and the Mutiny Bill Lord Carlisle 1781

[1] 'In short, my dear lord,' this singular letter concluded, 'this matter is of extreme moment; but if Lord North, whose dispositions towards us, both officially and personally, are not unkind, does not fully feel its importance, we have only to meet this difficulty with others, and go on as we can.'—'Mr. Eden to Lord Hillsborough, July 15, 1781. Most secret.'

felt comparatively easy. The temper of the House had been tried on both subjects in the last session, with satisfactory results; but the Declaration of Independence had a charm for the ears of Irishmen which made the Constitution on this side far more vulnerable; and he saw that his utmost efforts would be necessary if it was to be successfully resisted. Whether Eden received the powers which he desired of drawing on the English exchequer is uncertain. Other points, however, were looked for on which popular prejudices might be humoured. The sugar duty question would certainly be revived. If the Irish consumer wished to pay an extra price for his sugar to benefit his country's trade, Lord Carlisle thought he might be indulged. A vote of thanks might be given graciously to the Volunteers; and his hands would be strengthened, he said, if he might consent at last to the change in the judges' tenure. There was no modern instance of a judge's dismissal, and it was hard to assign a producible reason for placing the Irish bench in a different position from that of their brethren in England.[1]

To these suggestions the Cabinet had but one answer. With enemies on all sides of them, they stood to their old policy of uncompromising resistance. It was a matter of course that the Viceroy should be instructed to oppose constitutional changes, to resist a Declaration of Independence, to resist attacks on the securities for the good behaviour of the Irish Parlia-

[1] 'The Earl of Carlisle to Lord Weymouth, September 15. Most secret.'

ment. But the small acts of grace which Lord Carlisle recommended to soothe and satisfy the minds of moderate men were, it seemed, equally distasteful. The Volunteers might be thanked if it were insisted on, but there were to be no taxes on manufactured sugar; and 'as to giving the Irish judges the same position which the judges had in England,' 'the King's servants had to observe that nothing could be more dangerous and improper than such an act, without the clauses which were inserted by the Privy Council in the former bill, on which it was thrown out by the House of Commons in Ireland.'[1]

The Viceroy was thus thrown on his own resources to meet the storm, of which the sounds of the approach were every moment becoming more audible. The Volunteers had continued their reviews through the summer into the autumn, to the infinite satisfaction of admiring Ireland. The Ulster corps, with Lord Charlemont at their head, paraded at Belfast in the presence of 6000 spectators. The officers presented an address to the commander-in-chief, and Charlemont replied with corresponding flattery. 1781

'I behold,' he said, 'a powerful army, self-raised, self-clothed, self-paid; disciplined by its own efforts, so that the most experienced veteran must admire. I behold my country, fearless of invasion, formidable to her enemies, respected by her sister kingdom, an object of veneration to all Europe; constitutional freedom emerging from the dark abyss into which she had been

[1] 'Lord Hillsborough to the Earl of Carlisle, September, 1781.'

plunged by folly and corruption, lawless and absurd oppression.'

Whether Ireland was really at that moment the object of veneration which she supposed, it would be discourteous to enquire too curiously. That the veneration, if it existed, would not have survived a trial of the Volunteers in the field, may be asserted with more certainty. When the Government accepted their offer to defend Cork, three hundred men were all that came forward. They had courage in plenty, and, no doubt, goodwill; but 'scarcely a corps had any camp equipage,' or could be moved for more than two days out of reach of their homes. They were totally unprovided with everything necessary to soldiers beyond a uniform and a musket. Not one of their officers 'would accept a commission from the Crown or subject himself to the Articles of War;' and when their strength was at its highest the Duke of Portland gave it as his deliberate opinion that, unless they were assisted by an English division, 'five thousand regular troops, who could effect a landing, would remain masters of whatever port they might choose to occupy,' for all the resistance they would meet with from the Volunteers.[1]

Nevertheless, if not dangerous to the enemy, they were a formidable element of possible internal mischief, and Lord Carlisle was justified in regarding the prospect before him with serious apprehension.

The opening of the session which was big with the fate

[1] 'The Duke of Portland to Thomas Townshend, July 18, 1782.' S. P. O.

of Ireland at length arrived. It was the 9th of October, ten days before the catastrophe at York Town. In default of money, or any substantial act of grace which might have served instead of it, Mr. Eden had been lavish of promises to be fulfilled after good behaviour, when the campaign should be over. He stood in need, as he well knew, of all the friendship that he could make. The Irish debt, for one thing, was now nearly three millions, the annual deficit more than a quarter of a million, and trade still refusing to rise, of course through the invidious machinations of ever-guilty England. 1781

The speech was studiously humble, Lord Carlisle seeming as if he was awed by the crowd which filled every corner of the galleries. His majesty was said to be filled with the warmest wishes for Ireland's happiness, and in consideration for her sufferings would, notwithstanding the war, make no extraordinary demands upon her. Towards the Volunteers the Viceroy forced himself into expressions of gratitude and an admiration neither of which it was possible for him to feel.

The address was moved by Mr. O'Neil, who coupled with it the expected proposal for the thanks of the House to the Volunteers. After the Viceroy's fulsome language, opposition on this account was expected from no one. It appeared, however, that among the members present there was one at least who would neither speak any untrue word himself, nor would listen in silence to the insincerity of others. Thirteen months only had passed since in that House the resolutions of

these same Volunteers had been condemned as false, scandalous, and libellous; since the editor of the *Hibernian Journal* had been rebuked for publishing them, and La Touche, the chairman of the Volunteer meeting, had been obliged to apologize.

Mr. Fitzgibbon, member now for the University of Dublin, being without the admiration professed by others for the singular body who had taken on themselves to dictate to Parliament, moved that, before the thanks were voted to the Volunteers, the censures should be read which the House had passed on them at the close of the last session.

Had a spectre appeared on the floor, the members could not have been more startled. On all sides they sprung to their feet to clamour down so inconvenient a proposal. Tom Conolly, who had been the mover of the censure, deprecated the revival of it. The Attorney-general professed his high respect 'for a virtuous armed people.' The scandal was hushed up in the enthusiasm while the vote was passed, and men tried to forget that it had happened. None the less Fitzgibbon, in that daring action, had shown friend and foe the metal of which he was made. He, for himself, had declared war against insolent anarchy and factious imposture, and had struck his first blow.

Pandora's box was now opened. Bradstreet, the Recorder of Dublin, came first with a Habeas Corpus Act, and a motion for a committee to enquire into the state of the kingdom. Yelverton followed with a notice that he would bring in a bill to take from the Council,

English and Irish, the powers which they exercised under Poynings' Act to alter bills of the Irish Parliament. Then Grattan came to fulfil his threat of the preceding year, and gave notice that he would move to repeal the Mutiny Bill.

The debates had become interesting to the public. The galleries were crammed with eager listeners, who occasionally joined in the discussions. On the first of November there was an exchange of courtesies between the audience and the members on Bradstreet's Habeas Corpus Act. The audience were dissatisfied at the tone of the speeches. The members shouted 'Order' from the floor, and called the strangers in the galleries ruffians.

Floor and galleries were only amusing themselves before the chief performers appeared on the stage. Another actor besides Fitzgibbon was to play an important part there. Mr. Grattan had assumed the place which his achievements in the past year seemed to have won for him as leader of the Opposition. He found, when he began to bring in his measures, that another claimant for public favour was disputing pre-eminence with him. Ten years before, Mr. Flood had been what Grattan then was—the proud antagonist of English influence, the all-adored declaimer on the rights and the oppressions of Ireland. His eloquence and his influence had purchased or him the ordinary rewards of successful agitation. He had obtained the most lucrative office at the disposition of the Castle, with the immensely-coveted seat in the Privy Council; and

having achieved the highest objects of an Irish politician's ambition, his career as a patriot was assumed to be over. His services thenceforward, except in extraordinary cases, had been secured to the Crown.

November, 1781

The agitation with which he had played had unexpectedly changed its character. From being a mere avenue to public employment it had become a national power, threatening to change the face of the Constitution; and unable to endure to see the place once so brilliantly occupied by himself snatched from him by a younger rival, impatient to hear another's name shouted by the million voices which had once rung with his own, while his mind was still in its maturity, and his power unimpaired, Mr. Flood believed that he could recover his lost position, and a second time become the champion of Irish liberty. In the debates of 1780 he had shown signs that he was restless in his chains. The growth of the movement in the interval had determined him to break them. On the first occasion which offered, when Grattan brought up the Mutiny Bill, he rushed to the front, and in the old style poured out a stream of declamation on the profligacy of the Castle expenditure, by which he had himself condescended to profit.

The returned prodigal was not very warmly received. George Ponsonby congratulated him on the recovery of his voice, after seven years of silence, and hinting sarcastically at the probable consequences, applauded the public spirit which made him risk the loss of the best appointment which the Government had to bestow. His

friends exclaimed at the enormity of the supposition that he should lose his office for obeying his conscience. If he shared their feelings and believed that the Government would not dare to punish him, he calculated too much upon the King's cowardice. He had tried the patience of the Cabinet already, when he boasted that the Vice-Treasurership had been the unsolicited gift of his sovereign. His sovereign remembered too accurately the history of that transaction, and showed his sense of Mr. Flood's conduct by striking his name with his own hand from the list of Privy Councillors. Mr. Flood only escaped deprivation of the office, for which he had sued so ardently, by immediate voluntary resignation. The coolness of his reception by the patriots, and the prompt action of the Crown, stimulated him to more violent efforts.

When Grattan's motion on the Mutiny Bill came to a division on the 13th of November, it was lost by a large majority. Mr. Flood desired to show that an experienced general could succeed where his younger rival had failed, and revived it under another form. The opportunity selected for these attacks on the British army was ungracious and unfortunate. At the moment when the Irish popular leaders were clamouring for measures which destroyed the discipline and threatened the existence of the scanty regiments which formed, nevertheless, the sole effective defence of Ireland against invasion; when the cattle-houghers, encouraged by parliamentary rhetoric, were hamstringing British soldiers who were straying carelessly in the provincial 1781

towns, the poor army of which they formed a part, in another quarter of the world, was crowning itself with immortal glory. For a year past a never intermitting storm of shot and shell had rained into Gibraltar. The houses in the town were all destroyed. The inhabitants, gentle and simple, were crowded in the casemates. Enormous works had been thrown up at the neck of the Peninsula by the most accomplished engineers which the allied nations could produce; and from behind those works, and under a fire before which no living thing could show itself and escape destruction, the choicest troops of France and Spain were to advance and drive the English into the sea. All was ready for the attack. Ten thousand tons of powder had been distributed among the magazines. On one of those very same November nights when Grattan was wreathing his brow with an aureole and Flood was fighting for the recovery of his patriotic laurels, General Ross stole out[1] in the darkness with two thousand men, stormed into the Spanish lines, swept the trenches, overthrew the palisades, and laying trains into the magazines, sent the results of twelve months' toil and the passionate hopes of England's enemies, with one wild roar into the air.

It was not the Irish Volunteers just then which Europe was admiring, as Lord Charlemont supposed, but the British defence of the barren rock which stands sentinel at the gates of the Mediterranean. Mr. Flood's spirited endeavours, at that instant at least, were not

[1] November 27.

allowed to succeed To his extreme mortification, he failed more decisively than Grattan had failed. The patriot phalanx declined to follow his call. He was defeated by 146 to 66.

The Attorney-general improved the occasion. He observed with delicate irony that Mr. Flood's situation reminded him of a parish clerk whom 1781 he had known when he was at the Temple, going by the name of Harry Plantagenet.[1] Harry had acquired his soubriquet as a king of sportsmen. When the hounds were at fault, no whip was so skilful as Harry in bringing them back to the trail. They followed no voice so readily as Harry's. The huntsman, seeing his influence over the dogs, took him into employment and dressed him in the royal uniform. In this situation his zeal languished, he became lazy and self-indulgent. Younger men outrode him and took his place in the favour both of dogs and field. He became jealous; he quarrelled with his masters. He went back to hunt in opposition, but he found now that the spell was broken, that not a hound would obey him, not a rider would follow him, and he returned to the Temple Church to sing psalms and care for his soul.

The story was told with a dramatic humour which sparkled the more brilliantly the more the House showed its enjoyment. The arrow hung by the barb in Flood's side. In vain he tried to shake it from him, and capered like the bull in the arena when the *chulos* plant the banderilla in his shoulders.

[1] Flood's name was Henry.

The Irish gentry, for a time at least, were showing a nobler spirit than their chosen champions.

Yelverton had given notice that on the 5th of December he would move for the consideration of Poynings' Act. Before the day came the news arrived of Lord Cornwallis's surrender. Struck at once with the unfitness of pressing a hostile motion at such a crisis, he proposed in place of it an address to the Crown of simple and unaffected good feeling. He said, 'it would ill become the loyalty of Ireland to remain in apathy, when Britain, surrounded with enemies, was struggling against a warring world, with the admiration of every generous mind.' He was not expressing the sentiments either of the mob out of doors, or of Grattan, the representative of the mob in Parliament. The Irish, generally, could not be expected to feel regret at the disasters of their oppressors. Grattan stormed at Yelverton's weakness, and declared that Ireland would be mad if she exerted herself to save England from misfortune. The House was of a different opinion. The address of sympathy was carried by a very large majority.[1]

The division showed Grattan that the Castle was stronger than he had hoped. So far he had made no progress in a campaign where he had looked for immediate victory. He assumed that his defeat was owing (as perhaps in part it was) to the usual debasing influences. He repeated the language of the Volunteers, and openly accused the Viceroy of spending the

[1] 167 to 37..

Irish revenue in corrupting the conscience of Parliament.[1] Flood, snatching at any instrument which would give him back his place in the people's hearts, took up the subject which Yelverton had not dropped, but had laid aside for a fortnight out of good feeling. Yelverton's motion was to come on again on the 18th. Flood dragged it forward in an altered shape on the 11th, and moved for a committee to consider the conditions under which heads of bills were certified with England. His cause was good. It has been seen in many instances how mischievously the Privy Council both in England and Ireland abused their powers to defeat good measures or forward bad ones. Mr. Flood explained with correctness that the modern practice was never contemplated when the Act on which it was based became law. Sir Edward Poynings' Act had been passed when the communication between the two countries was slow and difficult, and the object of it had been to prevent the Viceroys of Ireland from giving the Royal assent on their own responsibility to measures of which England disapproved. By the ingenuity of James the First the Irish Council had been shaped after the pattern of the Scotch Lords of Articles; and following that example they had been allowed to remodel, and even originate, heads of bills

December, 1781

[1] 'As to the appropriation of the money, I am ashamed to state it. Let the minister defend it. Let him defend the scandal of giving pensions, directly or indirectly, to the first of the nobility. Let him defend the minute corruption which, in small bribes and annuities, leaves honourable gentlemen poor while it makes them dependent.'—*Irish Debates*, December 7, 1781.

which were the property of Parliament. He spoke eloquently, as he always did. The House was, in principle, on his side, for there was scarcely a single member—not even Fitzgibbon—who did not desire to see the powers of the Council modified;[1] but they resented Flood's taking the question out of Yelverton's hands, and he was beaten almost as severely as before.

Flood being pushed aside, not without loud complaints, Yelverton resumed charge of his own bill, the effect of which, if carried, would be to place the Irish Parliament in the same position as the English. The Irish Parliament was to frame its own measures as pleased itself. The Crown was to be left with a veto as the constitutional symbol of sovereignty. The 6th of George the First had been mentioned repeatedly in the debate. The sentiment of the House was distinct that the English Parliament had nothing to do with Ireland, and could pass no laws affecting it. At a calmer time many questions would have suggested themselves on the relations in which the two countries would stand towards one another, and in which Ireland would stand towards the Executive Government, if the tie between them was reduced to the person of the sovereign. What was to happen if on points of public policy or general commerce the two Legislatures should be in collision?—if the Crown should withhold its con-

[1] Hely Hutchinson was an exception. He had no belief in an independent regenerated Irish Parliament. He looked for reform in another direction, and quoted Pope's too little remembered lines:—

'For modes of Government let fools contest;
Whate'er is best administered is best.'

sent from a measure desired in Ireland, but disapproved in England? Ireland's ambition was, in fact, to defy the laws of gravity; bring the inferior country to be regarded and treated as an equal, and her slightest trade being dependent on the protection of the English navy, to be allowed to regulate the details of it after her own pleasure. Another more vital difficulty there was too, such as had already occurred after the Revolution, when there was a King *de facto* on the throne, and a Pretender aspiring to it! Was the English Parliament to decide who was to be Ireland's sovereign; and if they differed in opinion, who was to judge between them?

These objections could scarcely have escaped discussion had the temper of the time permitted; but enthusiasm will not believe in obstacles to the gratification of its hopes. The heads of Yelverton's bill were brought in and passed for transmission; and the heads of another bill were passed also, which being practical, was of more real importance. The concessions made in the last session to the Catholics were then supposed to be final, but the first removal of painful restrictions makes those which remain the more irksome. The principle has been abandoned, the outworks of the fortress have been carried; and, as a matter of course, the attack is continued while anything is left to be done. Luke Gardiner, who had charge of the bill of 1780, now introduced a second. As the law stood the Catholics could take leases for 999 years; they could not yet acquire freeholds. Gardiner said his object was to raise the Catholics of Ireland to the same position in which they

were now placed in England, and allow them to purchase,
1781 inherit, and hold property on the same terms as other subjects. When favours were asked for the Catholics, the English Government always responded. More than ever were the Catholics now valuable to them as a counterpoise to the Volunteers. The Cabinet, looking only to the present moment, had no doubts of the policy of concession. Opinions in Ireland, even in the patriot camp, were divided. Grattan, whose dream was of a revived nationality, declared that Ireland would never prosper till its inhabitants were 'a people.' Charlemont was hostile. Flood, either from conviction or antagonism to Grattan, was prepared to resist to the utmost, on Protestant principles. On the first discussion on the introduction of the heads, Fitzgibbon was the most rational speaker. He admitted that the penal laws were an anachronism. He believed, as most intelligent men in Europe then believed, that Romanism had ceased to be dangerous as a political power. Toleration, he said, had become the rule of the world, and Ireland must not be left behind. The Irish Catholics had earned a restoration of their rights by their patience under protracted disabilities. He advised only that the degree of concession intended should be carefully considered; that what was to be done should be done completely, and that the subject should be finally disposed of. Leave was then given. The heads were introduced, to be debated after the Christmas recess. The supplies were voted. Yelverton's bill was sent to England for approval. Complimentary addresses were exchanged

between the Viceroy and the Speaker, and the House separated till the 29th of January. The first part of the session had belied Lord Carlisle's fears. With judicious management, and with the help, perhaps, of the Catholic Relief Bill, the remainder of it he hoped might be got over, if not with brilliancy, yet without misfortune. Though some constitutional changes might be necessary, they might be kept within limits. Grattan's following was evidently weak, and Flood carried no one with him but a handful of personal admirers.

SECTION IV.

On the re-assembling of Parliament the first subject which came on for consideration in the House of Commons was the Catholic Relief Bill. The disagreement in the popular party and the objections of the more serious politicians had become wider and deeper by reflection.

Feb. 1782

Hely Hutchinson, who always spoke to the purpose, deprecated hasty legislation on a ticklish subject. He was opposed on principle to the continuance of penalties on conscience, but he thought that the re-introduction of the Catholics as a power in the State was beginning at the wrong end. He was in favour of the recognition and payment of the Catholic clergy by the State. He recommended the institution of a college for their home education, where they would escape the influences to which they were exposed in France and Spain.

Feb. 5

On the 15th, when the Bill came to be committed, Fitzgibbon spoke. He said that till that morning he had seen no danger in Mr. Gardiner's proposal, but on reading the Bill carefully he had discovered that, in the shape in which it was offered to the House, the first clause touched the Act of Forfeiture; it would thus affect the titles on which four-fifths of Irish land was held, and would throw the entire country into confusion.

Of course there was a panic, which was not diminished by the praises bestowed by the Government speakers on the good humour with which the Catholics had endured their afflictions.

The Attorney-general said that 'he had seen at Monaghan at the same moment three large congregations flowing simultaneously out of a meeting-house, a church, and a mass-house, and the individuals which composed them mixing in the street with every mark of affection and good will.'[1]

The Attorney-general might have found the explanation in the laws which he was denouncing. When the Catholics were indulged they had attempted massacre and confiscation; when they were bitted and bridled they were peaceable and good-humoured. That this was the correct interpretation may be seen in the fruits of religious equality. When a Protestant prelate of the disestablished Church walks through an Irish city the devout Celt displays his piety by spitting on him as he passes.[2] A truth which has become now so painfully evident was not wholly unperceived in 1782. Mr. Flood defended the original imposition of the Penal Laws. 'Ninety years ago,' he said, 'the question was whether Popery and arbitrary power should be established in the person of King James, or the Protestant religion in the person of King William. Four-fifths of

[1] *Irish Debates*, February 15, 1782.

[2] Fact in one instance certainly. It was told to me by the bishop who was himself the sufferer, and he described the thing not as having happened to him once, but as *since the disestablishment* happening repeatedly.

Ireland were for King James; they were defeated. I rejoice in their defeat. The laws that followed were not laws of persecution, they were a political necessity.' 'Are you,' he asked, 'prepared for a new government? What will be the consequence if you give Catholics equal powers with Protestants? Can a Protestant Constitution survive? The majority will attempt to alter the Constitution, and I believe they will be repelled by the minority. We will give all toleration to your religion; we will not give you political power, and the free ownership of land will bring political power in its rear.'[1]

To this argument the obvious answer was that the objection was too late. The principle had been conceded when the power of taking leases for 999 years had been granted. For the purpose of influencing elections a tenure for thirty generations was equivalent to a freehold. Nor could the more ardent patriots believe in the danger which Flood anticipated. The object was to raise the down-trodden Irish Catholic, to fit him for his place as the free citizen of an emancipated country, and already he was responding to the call.

'Ireland,' said Sir Boyle Roche, 'is like the Phœnix rising from its ashes. The debates on these laws have electrified the mass of the people. Instead of looking down like slaves they throw up their heads like men.'

Still, on this, and on other measures on which the patriotic heart was set, the House was timid, and the feeble knees required to be strengthened. Mr. Grattan

[1] *Irish Debates*, February, 1782.

fell back upon his friends in uniform, who in politics and in the field considered themselves Ireland's real sovereigns.

To the Volunteers the disaster at York Town had been an Irish victory. Elate and confident, they at once in their clubs repeated the resolutions of 1780, and declared that Parliament was controlled by a majority corrupted by the Castle. Delegates from the Ulster corps had been invited to meet at Dungannon, at the beginning of February, to consider the condition of the country. The appeal which Grattan resolved to make to them had probably been preconcerted when the delegates had arranged to assemble. Flood's opposition was troublesome. Like a skilful tactician Grattan invited Flood to share the honours of a campaign to most of the objects of which he was committed as deeply as Grattan himself. Grattan, Flood, and Lord Charlemont met privately in Dublin to draw up resolutions which the Dungannon delegates were to adopt. 1782

The first, framed by Grattan himself, was 'That a claim of any body of men, other than the King, Lords, and Commons of Ireland, to make laws by which Ireland was to be bound, was illegal, unconstitutional, and a grievance.'[1]

The second, which was Flood's, declared, 'That the powers exercised by the Privy Council of both kingdoms under colour of the law of Poynings were unconstitutional and a grievance.'

[1] Aimed at the 6th of George I.

On these points the triumvirs were agreed. The second contained the principle of Yelverton's Bill, which had not yet been returned from England.

Further than this Grattan knew that neither Flood nor Charlemont would go with him. He, therefore, without consulting them, himself added a third resolution:

'That we (the Volunteers) hold the right of private judgment in matters of religion to be equally sacred in others as in ourselves; that we rejoice in the relaxation of the penal laws against our Roman Catholic fellow-subjects, and that we conceive these measures to be fraught with the happiest consequences to the union and prosperity of the inhabitants of Ireland.'[1]

A trusty messenger galloped down with these resolutions to Dungannon. Two hundred and forty re-
Feb. 15 presentatives of the Ulster companies were in
1782 attendance on the day for which they were called. The streets of the town were lined with Volunteer troops. The delegates assembled in the church, where they sate in consultation till nightfall. At eight o'clock the propositions were unanimously voted, and went out in Charlemont's name over all quarters of Ireland, to be adopted by the brother delegates of the corps in the southern provinces.

Inadvertence in England gave Grattan unexpected assistance. The universal soreness in Ireland on the subject of laws affecting them being passed in the British Parliament was so notorious that the practice

[1] 'This resolution was crammed by Grattan into the messenger's bag after he was mounted.'—*Life of Grattan*, vol. ii. p. 205.

had been avoided, as far as it conveniently could; and as long as no aggravated case was allowed to arise, there was a hope that the Irish Parliament might abstain from challenging the right, and bringing the Legislatures into open collision. Unhappily, the name of Ireland had been allowed to appear in four trifling measures which had just been passed at Westminster. Irish jealousy detected at once a malignant purpose, and with these Acts in his hand and with the Dungannon resolutions at his back, Grattan rose a week after the Catholic debate to move the long-threatened Declaration of the Independence of the Legislature of Ireland. He was a loyal subject of the King, he said. He professed to prize the connection with Great Britain second only to the liberties of his country; but he charged Lord North's Government with conspiring against the constitutional freedom of Ireland. With 'Demosthenic thunder' he insisted that he would never submit to British legislation, and, unlike Yelverton, he insisted that now was the moment, now, when Britain's hands were tied by a general war, for Ireland to break her chain. Feb. 22

How much of Grattan's action was a sincere emanation of patriotism, how much was due to concerted action with the English Whigs, to embarrass and overthrow Lord North's tottering Administration, was known to Grattan himself, and perhaps to no other person. The Whigs believed afterwards that he had played with them, and reproached him with ingratitude. It is certain, at any rate, that without their assistance,

even the Volunteers would not have enabled him to succeed.

The Attorney-general opposed the motion as hazardous, unreasonable, and unnecessary. Against Mr. Grattan's rhetoric he opposed the practical fact to which Fitzgibbon had alluded before, that the Act of Settlement rested on the Act of Forfeiture passed by the Long Parliament in the first year of the Irish Rebellion. A declaration that the Irish Parliament alone could pass laws to bind Ireland, would render the Act of Forfeiture invalid, would 'loosen the bonds of society, and leave the whole island to be grappled for by the descendants of the old proprietors.' Illusion could not endure the contact of so serious a reality. The Provost, Gervase Bushe, even George Ponsonby, took the Government side, and Grattan was beaten on a division by 137 to 68.

One impression left by the debate was remarkable. Yelverton proposed to meet the legal difficulty by 'a Bill for quieting possessions held under the Forfeiture Act.' Not a single speaker on either side, not even the Attorney-general, though challenged repeatedly to give his opinion, defended the principle of English Acts being of binding force in Ireland.

'The majority by which the motion was postponed,' Lord Carlisle wrote on the following day, 'will satisfy his majesty's Ministers that Government can prevent the question being carried. But the principle, nevertheless, is universally insisted on. Every rank and order of this nation are possessed of it. I question whether any lawyer would advise his client to bring his

cause to an issue on the validity of a British Act in this kingdom, or whether a jury would give a verdict on that foundation.'[1]

Yet, again, it was the English conquest which alone had given to the existing owners the possession of Irish land. It reposed upon English authority. If the Catholics, according to the Dungannon resolutions, were to secure their political as well as their civil rights, even the English *legislative* authority it might be dangerous to part with. A Protestant House of Commons might pass a 'quieting' Bill as Yelverton suggested; but a House returned by a Catholic majority might repeal it. This unpleasant possibility was brought into view by a great debate immediately after Grattan's defeat on Mr. Gardiner's Catholic Relief Bill. Mr. Gardiner, carrying out the Dungannon spirit, proposed now to abolish all distinctions between Catholic and Protestant. The first clause of his Bill, as he had remodelled it, declared every Irish subject who would subscribe a simple oath of allegiance and the declaration against the jurisdiction of foreign Prince or Potentate, entitled to his full rights as a citizen. Fitzgibbon pointed out the consequences, and Gardiner accepted his help to change the form once more. The single Bill was divided into two. The first affected property only. The Catholics were enabled to acquire freehold, to buy and sell, bequeath and inherit, like every one else. To this there was to opposition. Mr. Eden walked out of the House before the division

[1] 'The Earl of Carlisle to Lord Hillsborough, February 23, 1782.'

to indicate the impartiality of the Government, and the Bill was carried.

The second affirmed and carried out the principle of complete religious toleration, repealed the laws which bore upon the priests, and restored to Catholic parents their rights to educate their children whether at home or abroad. This Bill was postponed, not out of any hostile feeling, but from difference of opinion on the still unsettled question of mixed or separate education. On the right of Catholics to have their own *schools* no question was raised. On whether the Act should be repealed which forbade them to send their children to be educated abroad, there arose a debate, remarkable as proving how far the harshness of the penal laws had been softened in practical application.

Fitzgibbon declared that so far from consenting to the repeal of the foreign Education Act, he would himself move for the introduction of such a law if it did not already exist. 'He would not suffer the Catholics to resort to regions of bigotry and superstition, where they would imbibe ideas hostile to liberty, neither did he mean that they should receive no education.' 'The *University of Dublin was already open to Catholics by connivance.*' 'If they declined to receive an education there, it was not on account of religion, *for no religious conformity was required*, but only because Catholics feared their children would imbibe the principles there of a free constitution.'

Fitzgibbon spoke as Member for the University. The Provost (Hely Hutchinson) rose after him. Let those

who can feel the ignominy of England's ill-success in Ireland read in his language one more record of opportunity thrown away. 'My opinion,' the Provost said, 'is against sending Catholics abroad for education, nor would I establish Popish colleges at home. Our gracious Sovereign, who is legislator for the University, may, I think, with ease be prevailed on to pass a statute for admitting Catholics. They need not be obliged to attend the Divinity Professors. *They may have one of their own.* I would have part of the public money applied to their use, to the support of poor lads as sizars, and to provide premiums for persons of merit. I would have them go into examinations, and make no distinctions between them and the Protestants but such as merit might claim. If these people dare to worship God in their own way, why should not the academic badge they wear be a mark of spirit and a pledge of the union between them and the Protestants? To prepare the Catholics for the University I would increase the number of diocesan schools, and have the Catholics instructed gratis in them; they should receive the best education in the Established University at the public expense; but by no means should Popish colleges be allowed, for by them we should again have the Press groaning with theories of controversy, college against college, and subjects of religious disputation that have long slept would again awake, and awake with the worst passions of the mind.' [1] March

[1] *Irish Debates*, March, 1782.

> There is a tide in the affairs of men
> Which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune;
> Omitted, all the voyage of their life
> Is bound in shallows and in miseries.

The history of Ireland is a history of such lost tides. Even now, at the eleventh hour, could England have laid hold with heartiness of a policy of which the Provost was shadowing out a part, Catholics and Protestants might still have been drawn together and towards the mother country; and disabilities would have then died of themselves because they no longer rested on disunion of sentiment. Even a united Irish nationality might have been safely allowed to revive, no more hostile to England than the nationalities of Wales or Scotland, but rising out of and resting upon an innocent and honourable pride.

It was not to be. No spirit of wisdom was presiding over the councils either of England or Ireland, whether among Whigs or Tories. It was with no desire to reconcile Irish Catholics to Protestantism and to the empire, that the Irish enthusiasts for reform were agitating to replace the Catholics in the Constitution, but to conjure into life the deluding phantom of Irish independence, to separate and not to reconcile, to snatch the moment of England's weakness to extort freedom for Ireland, which, being without strength to preserve, she must see pass from her like a shadow of a dream.

Men like Fitzgibbon and the Provost might contend within their own circle against the general madness, but every day the Viceroy found the atmosphere more heavily charged with electricity. He had done his

utmost, and his large majorities showed the strength of his influence in Parliament; but outside the walls the patriots were using language which might at any moment change into open violence.

In a most secret letter of the 3rd of March Lord Carlisle explained the position to Lord Hillsborough.

'Mr. Grattan, from a natural enthusiasm, and Mr. Flood, from a different motive, have concurred with great earnestness in bringing forward every question tending to assert an independent right of legislation in Ireland. I have in no case suffered the smallest diminution of the asserted rights of Great Britain. I have called forth the whole strength of Government to repel every such attempt, and have resisted some of the strongest questions which were ever pressed in an Irish Parliament. The consequence of this steadiness has been great and uniform success. But I must now draw your Lordship's attention beyond the consideration of parliamentary triumphs, which, if made the sole object of attention, may produce calamitous consequences. The restless and reasoning disposition of the Volunteers which do not fall short of 30,000 men actually in arms,[1] the jealousy with which the interference of British laws has long been considered, the approaching meeting of the corps at the opening of the spring, the instigation of the men who from different motives are opposing the Government, the resentment excited by the uniform success of my Government, are all circumstances which induce me to look forward with uneasiness. Your

1782

[1] Grattan spoke of them as 100,000.

Lordship cannot be ignorant that the actual exercise of the authority of the British Parliament over Ireland was totally impracticable long before I arrived in the kingdom. There was not a magistrate or revenue officer, however dependent, who would venture to enforce an English law. There was not a jury in the kingdom who would find a verdict under an English Act. I may infer that I can close the session without suffering a vote to be carried contrary to my wishes; but the support, and possibly the existence, of a permanent good Government in this kingdom depends on maintaining the many respectable friends of my administration in the fair opinion of their countrymen. Their weight is not only essential to my support in Parliament, but perhaps more materially among the Volunteer associations, from which they might be excluded if I should be compelled to close the session without quieting the ferment.[1]

1782

Lord Carlisle's majorities were not entirely due to Mr. Eden's drafts on Mr. Robinson. Irish members would engage their services, and yet might be found wanting, as had been many times experienced at critical moments. But they had discovered that if they rushed along too fast on the patriotic career, they might blunder into positions where their estates would be in danger. They had gone into raptures over the Volunteers, but the sense that the country was in the hands of armed politicians who were not under military law

[1] 'The Earl of Carlisle to Lord Hillsborough, March 3, 1782. Most secret.' S. P. O.

was, on reflection, not particularly pleasant. 'It was the unanimous sentiment of every able man in the kingdom,' Lord Carlisle said, 'that the question of legislation was tending to some serious issue.' The Viceroy's earnest desire was to find a way out of the difficulty which moderate people would accept. It was not a question of mere national pride. Irish commerce was carried on under the British flag and protected by the British navy. Irish commercial interests abroad were under charge of British consuls. Laws must be passed from time to time in the British Parliament by which Ireland would be constructively affected. Yelverton, with Lord Carlisle's full approval, advised that every English Act comprehending Ireland should be re-enacted in the Irish Parliament. Fitzgibbon and Hussey Burgh both agreed that this was the most rational solution. Grattan was not at first violently hostile. Flood only refused to listen to a compromise, and would hear of nothing but unconditional surrender of the English right. He saw an opportunity of recovering his supremacy as the incorruptible assertor of Irish liberties, and in such a mood it was as useless to reason with him as with the orators of the Volunteers and the multitude who repeated their common-places in every corner of the island.

The situation was thus becoming really dangerous. Lord Carlisle sent the Cabinet for inspection a copy of papers about to be submitted for signature to the grand juries at the approaching assizes. The country gentlemen were invited to accept the Dungannon resolutions;

to pledge themselves to the Irish nation and to one another to oppose the execution of any statute deriving its authority from England; to support Ireland's rights with life and fortune, and to promise annually to renew their obligations till those rights had been definitely conceded.[1]

1782

Yelverton's measure for the alteration of Poynings' Act was still waiting in England, Lord North's Cabinet, already at its last gasp, not knowing what to decide about it. Being one at least of the measures on which Ireland's patriotic heart was set, Lord Carlisle thought that if it was returned immediately, he could procure a compromise on the question of legislative authority, and induce the grand juries to withhold their signatures. If Yelverton's bill was not returned, he declared himself ready to be guided by his majesty's commands and by the wisdom of his councils; but so far as his own judgment went, he declined to answer for the consequences. The friends of Government in both Houses were becoming frightened. If the suspense was protracted, they might be 'overawed by popular violence, and pass votes disclaiming British legislation.' Mr. Grattan had more than once spoken of possible hostile resolutions of the Irish Houses, 'as parliamentary ordinances to be maintained by the armed associations.' In dread of matters being forced into so dangerous an issue, the Viceroy said 'he had welcomed the help of Yelverton, Burgh, and Fitzgibbon.'[2]

[1] 'The Earl of Carlisle to Lord Hillsborough, March 7. Most secret.'

[2] 'The Earl of Carlisle to Lord Hillsborough, March 16.' S. P. O.

A ministerial crisis being now rapidly approaching in England, the Irish Parliament adjourned for a month on the 14th of March. Before the separation, Grattan moved and carried a call of the House of Commons for the 18th of April. On that day all members were invited to be in their places as they tendered the rights of Ireland. These trying questions would then be revived, perhaps, under more favourable auspices. Lord Carlisle could not but confess that he had been in some degree infected by Irish sentiment in the judgment which he formed upon them. He had found, in common with every Viceroy who preceded him, that when he spoke to the Cabinet of wrongs done to Ireland, and recommended a measure or measures as tending to remedy them, he had been received either with insolent neglect or contemptuous refusal. English rule in Ireland had become so shameful a parody of all that is meant by righteous and legitimate authority, that nature herself repudiated it. Ireland could not and would not be governed any longer by English laws. Lord Carlisle thought, and avowed that he thought, that she might be governed well and happily by laws of her own; while, if England refused to consent to an arrangement, he anticipated inevitable convulsions, the end of which no one could foresee.[1]

Before the letter in which Lord Carlisle expressed these sentiments reached England, Lord North's administration was at an end. Lord Rockingham had

[1] 'The Earl of Carlisle to Lord Hillsborough, March 19, 1782.'

been sent for by the king, and the Opposition, who had condemned the entire policy of the Government abroad and at home, in America and in Ireland, was about to pass to the direction of the empire.

SECTION V.

THE surrender of Lord Cornwallis was the concluding scene of the efforts of England to recover her revolted colonies. The steady opposition of the Whigs had been ineffectual so long as apparent but useless victories attended the English campaigns. A second capture of a complete army gave force to arguments to which the national pride had refused to listen. Motions made in the British Parliament to discontinue the war in December and January were resisted by reduced majorities. On the 22nd of February the majority was reduced to one. On the 27th the Opposition carried an address to the king, who acquiesced in what was now unavoidable. Lord North resigned, and Rockingham, Fox, and Shelburne were called into office to wind up the quarrel. The battle had been fought along the entire line of ministerial policy. Both Fox and Rockingham had supported Grattan on the alteration of the Mutiny Bill, and Lord Carlisle's change of opinion did not save him from being involved in the fate of his friends. Ireland was no longer to be thwarted in developing her Constitution according to her own fancies, and the disgrace of Lord North's representative was made a peace-offering to the indignation of the patriots. Lord Carlisle was treated with singular discourtesy. The resignation of the Ministry was no sooner known in Dublin than Eden hastened over to

March, 1782

place Lord Rockingham in possession of the exact situation of the country. Eden found, on arriving in London, that he had crossed a curt despatch, informing Lord Carlisle that the king had no longer occasion for his services as Lord-Lieutenant of Yorkshire. It was a peculiarly offensive method of informing him that he must resign the Viceroyalty. The Cabinet had already chosen a successor for him in the Duke of Portland.

1782

They would have acted less imprudently if they had waited for the information which Eden would have given them, for, as the event proved, they were entirely ignorant of the spirit which they were about to encounter. They had assumed that as soon as his friends were in power Grattan would at once work in harmony with them. Though they hated Tories and Tory principles, they had inherited the traditions of English statesmen. They were trained politicians, unable to believe that the rash project of an Ireland really independent could be seriously entertained by a reasonable man; still less, if a few enthusiasts had formed so wild a dream, were they prepared to countenance it. They supposed that they had only to supersede Lord North's Viceroy by a nobleman of their own school to find the stormy waters settle into repose.

Lord Rockingham's eyes might have been opened had he read Lord Carlisle's last despatch. Had that nobleman been continued in office the Yelverton compromise might have been accepted. But Eden found that his chief had been treated in a fashion 'which amounted to personal insult.' When he told Lord

Shelburne that the hasty appointment of the Duke of Portland would work mischief, Shelburne answered briefly that he did not agree with him; and Eden, naturally indignant, 'refused to hold further intercourse with the Ministry' on the Irish subject.[1] He rose instead, the day after this conversation, in his place in the House of Commons. He declared Ireland to be on the edge of civil war; and to shield Lord Carlisle from the undeserved imputation of having caused so dangerous an excitement by resistance to the wishes of the people, he moved himself, on his own responsibility, the repeal of the 6th of George the First.[2] It was a rash act on his part, rising out of violent resentment. The House showed such serious displeasure, that he withdrew the motion almost as soon as it had been made. Colonel Luttrell (Lord Carhampton afterwards) enquired whether the repeal of that Act would satisfy Ireland. Eden could not say that it would, but declared that peace could not be preserved without it. Fox rose very angry. 'He,' he said, 'was now responsible for the honour of his country, and would not consent to see England humbled at the feet of Ireland.' 'The situation was worse than he had feared, and the persons to blame for it were Eden himself and Lord Carlisle.' The blame lay rather with Fox and his Whig friends, who had encouraged Grattan for their own purposes.

[1] 'Mr. Eden to Lord Shelburne, April 5, 1782.'—*Life of Grattan*, vol. ii.

[2] The English Act, let the reader be once more reminded, which declared, *totidem verbis*, the right of the English Parliament to legislate for Ireland.

They had sown the seed, and they were to gather the harvest. Portland had sent Charles Sheridan over to learn Grattan's views. Sheridan wrote that Grattan told him that the Declaration of Independence would infallibly be passed after the recess. The Volunteers had pledged life and fortune to carry it, and nothing less would now satisfy the people. At the time of the adjournment they might have allowed the question of right to sleep, if they could have been assured that the power would not be exercised. But public sentiment had changed; nothing short of the repeal of the offensive Act would now preserve the union between the two countries.

It was true, then, that Independence was really contemplated. The connection was to be reduced to the tie of a common sovereign. Ireland was to be as Hanover, or the alternative was to be total separation. If total separation was not rather to follow as the consequence of such a wild arrangement, a thousand delicate problems would have to be considered and provided for. The Cabinet was still incredulous that Grattan could mean to precipitate a resolution of such pregnant quality as if it were on a question of common politics. Lord Charlemont at any rate must retain his senses, and Fox wrote to him to beg at least for a short delay. A Viceroy was going over whose sentiments were identical with Lord Charlemont's. Why should there be differences between them? The interests of Ireland and England could not be divided. Nothing more could be needed than the establishment of Whig principles in

every part of the empire.[1] Rockingham wrote in the same tone. He was unable to believe, he said, that an adjournment of the House of Commons for a fortnight or three weeks would not be consented to. Portland must have time to consult the leading members of the Patriot party. 'He could not think it good policy in the House of Commons of Ireland to carry a measure of so onerous a character with precipitancy.'[2]

English Whig statesmen never have understood Ireland, and perhaps never will understand it. In the Irish people there is one serious aspiration nursed in their heart of hearts and never parted with, and that is separation from England. Whatever the pretext for immediate agitation, this is what they mean, and every concession is valued only as a step towards the one great end. Nothing else will satisfy them, for nothing else meets their wishes. But as their object is one which reason declares to be unattainable, so they never pursue it by reasonable means. They wish passionately; they are unable to propose deliberately; their politics are the blind movements of impulsive enthusiasm, and English Liberals treat them as if they were serious, and play with them, and lead them to form hopes, which as soon as those hopes take their natural shape they are obliged to disappoint.

Had Grattan's theory of an Irish constitution been formed deliberately he would have avoided the appear-

[1] 'C. J. Fox to Lord Charlemont, April 4.'—*Life of Grattan*, vol. ii.

[2] 'The Marquis of Rockingham to Lord Charlemont, April 9.'—Ibid.

ance of haste. The more gravely the step which he desired was taken, the more surely it would have been irrevocable. But he knew too well the materials of which his followers were composed. He knew that if once the Duke of Portland was allowed to talk in private with them, the patriot phalanx would dissolve into air. Men like Charlemont, and Hussey Burgh, and Yelverton had not parted with their senses, and if a responsible statesman laid before them the difficulties which they would have to encounter before they had committed themselves, they would recoil from their own schemes. Grattan, therefore, refused to allow a single hour for consideration. Portland hastened over to be in time for the call of the House on the 16th of April. He carried with him discretionary powers unusually large.[1] He still hoped that he might find Grattan less unmanageable than Sheridan reported. If he was disappointed, if matters came to the worst, and if conditions were insisted on to which England could not submit with dignity, he was permitted, as a last alternative, to throw up the Government, and to leave the Irish Protestant and Catholic face to face with an independence even more complete than they had desired.

On landing, he again tried to obtain a few days' adjournment. 'Heat and passion,' he was obliged to report, 'had taken stronger hold than persons in England could be aware of; and it was the unanimous

[1] 'Among others, a warrant to the Postmaster-General to detain and open suspicious letters.—Duke of Portland to the Earl of Shelburne, April 15, 1782.' S. P. O.

opinion of every gentleman with whom he conversed that the attempt would be ineffectual.' He did not see Grattan, but continued to communicate with him through Charles Sheridan. The patriot demands had taken fuller shape in the recess. Ireland now required, 1, an independent Legislature; 2, a modification of Poynings' Act which would abolish the power of the English and Irish Councils in altering Bills; 3, a Biennial Mutiny Bill; and one more point now first introduced, a surrender of the right of appeal to England from the Irish Courts of Law. Grattan enquired whether on these points the Duke had come prepared to satisfy Ireland's expectations. The Duke had brought a formal message to the Irish Parliament that he was sent to consider their wishes; it would be answered by an address; and if the Duke would allow him to mention these four subjects, and inform the House that they would be conceded, Grattan declared himself ready to move the address in the place of the Declaration of Rights. The Duke required a copy of what Grattan intended to say. 'On perusal of it,' he said, 'I found the points contended for marked with such harshness and insisted on with such resolute pertinacity that I did not hesitate to return the paper.'[1]

The Speaker and the Provost appeared to unite in condemning Grattan's language, and undertook themselves to draw an address not liable to objection, which might equally prevent 'the Declaration of Rights.'

[1] 'Duke of Portland to Lord Shelburne, April 16. Most secret. S. P. O.

This, too, when it was produced, the Duke found himself unable to sanction, for it demanded the repeal of the 6th of George I.

'In this dilemma,' he wrote, 'I found myself within half an hour of the meeting of Parliament with only a choice of difficulties. I was certain that no effectual, and doubtful if any, resistance could be made to the Declaration which Mr. Grattan was to move. I was ill-informed of the strength of the Administration. I had to apprehend the effects of disappointment upon the minds of those who supported Lord Carlisle on condition of being recompensed at the end of the session.'[1]

Thus circumstanced, Portland himself sketched a neutral address, which he gave to Ponsonby and Conolly to be used at their discretion. He told the Council plainly that the Cabinet would consent to no specific measures till better informed of the wishes of the people. He found to his additional mortification that Lord Carlisle's recall was most unpopular, that the House meditated a vote of thanks to him and to Eden, with a recommendation of the latter to the King for some mark of distinguished favour.

[1] 'Duke of Portland to Lord Shelburne, April 16. Most secret.' S. P. O.

SECTION VI.

Now at length the fateful hour had come when the sun of Ireland's glory was to break in meridian splendour through the clouds which had so long overshadowed her. For a month every Irish heart had beat high with hope. On the 16th of April Mr. Grattan was to move a Declaration of Rights, which recalled America's Declaration of Independence; and the House of Commons, schooled by the Volunteers, and itself in a brief dream of patriotic intoxication, was by its vote to tell England and the world that Ireland's thraldom was ended. A grand review on the 17th was to celebrate the national triumph. The Volunteers had poured into Dublin from every part of Leinster. They were marching in uniform along the streets and quays, with the harp banners flying, and bands playing the national airs. Cavalry were prancing in a splendour which told for many a year on the estates of the noble lords who were their colonels and patrons. Artillery, served out of the Government stores, with the Woolwich stamp on them, were booming at intervals defiance of the foreign enemy, Great Britain being the foreigner. The nation was showing herself gloriously in arms for the occasion when her chosen hero was to announce her regeneration to an admiring world.

April, 1782

Amidst these scenes Portland drove from the Castle to the Parliament House.

The message was read by Hely Hutchinson. The King, it briefly said, being concerned to find that there was discontent among his loyal subjects of Ireland, recommended the Lords and Commons to take it into immediate consideration. Ponsonby followed with Portland's address, which was a mere echo of the message.

Then Grattan rose. He had been ill. He looked worn and anxious, but in his opening sentence he assumed that his cause was won.

'I am now,' he said, 'to address a free people. Ages have passed away, and this is the first moment in which you could be distinguished by that appellation. I have spoken on the subject of your liberty so often that I have nothing to add, and have only to admire by what heaven-directed steps you have proceeded until the whole faculty of the nation is braced up to the act of her own deliverance. I found Ireland on her knees. I watched over her with an eternal solicitude. I have traced her progress from injuries to arms, and from arms to liberty. Spirit of Swift, spirit of Molyneux, your genius has prevailed. Ireland is now a nation. In that new character I hail her, and bowing to her august presence I say, Esto Perpetua.'

Into what wild tumult of applause floors and galleries burst at hearing these words it is needless to tell. Neither is it needed to follow further the stream of eloquence which has passed into the standard manuals of oratory among the schoolbooks of two hemispheres. The brilliance of oratory is at all times and from the very nature of the art in the inverse ratio of the truth

contained in it; and as there never was a more shining speech delivered in the English language, so never was there speech with less substance in it which would bear the test of time. Nations are not born on the floors of debating societies, nor on the parade-ground of volunteers. Freedom must be won on the battle-field or it is perishable as the breath that boasts of it.

In truth and fact, Ireland, bound to England by situation, and inhabited by a people who would howl for liberty but never fight for it, had snatched from the embarrassments of her neighbour what she could neither keep nor use worthily while it was hers; and this glorious outburst of Grattan's is the sharpest satire on the race whom he was flattering with his vain bombast.

But the passing moment was his own. The American wound was unhealed. There had been enough of bloodshed, enough of coercion, coercion especially of Ireland, which in her depression had been so scandalously mishandled. England by injustice had trained the Irish into anarchy. Whether they would make better laws for themselves, and obey them, was an experiment at least worth the trying.[1]

[1] 'Whether Ireland was prepared to resist by force if Grattan's propositions had been rejected is a point on which there were differences of opinion. Grattan himself said, Yes. His friend, Mr. Day, says for him, Mr. Grattan was resolved to assist, even by arms, if driven to it, the liberties of Ireland.'—*Life of Grattan*, vol. ii. p. 272. Lord Clare says, No, and implies that the Duke of Portland was deceived by idle bravado. 'I can assert with perfect confidence,' Clare said, in his speech on the Union, 'that no gentleman of Ireland would at that day have drawn his sword against Great Britain,

The rhetorical part of the performance being over, Mr. Grattan moved an amendment to the address to assure the King of the loyalty of the Irish, but to tell him at the same time that 'Ireland was a distinct kingdom with a separate Parliament, and that this Parliament alone had a right to pass laws for her.' 'In the maintenance of that right the liberties of Irishmen consisted, and they would only yield it with their lives.' The points were then rehearsed which England was required to concede, and the demonstration over, the House consented to be adjourned while reference was made to the Cabinet.

Irish vanity had been gratified, and Portland thought it possible that after the display some cooler thought might follow. He held private conferences with hopeful members. He talked of negotiation. If Ireland were to receive such large concessions she must give something in return, and he hinted at a land-tax. Language of this kind was premature. For the moment the whole nation was delirious. Grattan desired a friend in London to tell Lord Shelburne that negotiation was impossible. Ireland demanded her rights, and did not mean to pay for them. The alternative he scarcely condescended to veil. 'If our requests are refused,' he said, 'we retire within ourselves, preserving our allegiance, but not executing English laws or English judgments. We consume our own manufactures

---

and it certainly was the duty of the King's servants, in whom his representative reposed a confidence, to have explained this to the Duke.'

and keep on terms of amity with England, but with that diffidence which must exist if she is so infatuated as to take away our liberty.' [1]

To show the Duke the uselessness of intrigue, one of the earliest acts of the House of Commons on its re-assembling was to pass the vote of thanks to Lord Carlisle, which he had deprecated as an insult to himself. 'It is no longer,' Portland wrote to Shelburne on the 26th of April,[2] 'the Parliament of Ireland that is to be managed or attended to, it is the whole of this country. It is the Church, the law, the army (I fear when I consider how it is composed), the merchant, the tradesman, the manufacturer, the farmer, the labourer, the Catholic, the Dissenter, the Protestant. All sects, all sorts and descriptions of men, unanimously call on Great Britain for a full and unequivocal satisfaction. They know and feel their strength. They know it is not in your power to send over such a force as will compel them to relinquish their claims; and having so recent an example of the fatal consequences of coercive measures they are in no fear that Great Britain will attempt a second experiment. For myself, during the preservation of the remains of the British Empire, my opinion is that you should concede to this country the full enjoyment of a free and independent Legislature, but that a line should be drawn to prevent their interference in matters of state and external commerce. Modify Poynings' Act for them. The abuse of it by

[1] 'H. Grattan to Mr. Day, April 22, 1782.'—*Life of Grattan*, vol. ii.
[2] S. P. O. 'Most secret and confidential.'

the Privy Council of this kingdom has been singularly offensive. As to the judicature, I know not what to advise. As I undertook this arduous employment with hopes which I had soon the mortification to be obliged to relinquish, but with views of which I shall never lose sight, I think it my duty to state shortly what I conceive will be the consequences of rejecting or delaying to satisfy the wishes of this country. For that a few words will suffice. In either case there would be an end of all government.'

The Duke of Portland, in his inexperience of Ireland, believed all that was said to him. Shelburne understood his countrymen better, and was more sceptical.

In all such contentions,' he replied, 'men asked for more at the beginning than they expected to get. It was possible the Irish Parliament would recede in some degree from its extreme demands.' If this was not so, and 'if the ties which had hitherto subsisted between the two countries were to be loosened or cut asunder,' he enquired, 'what plan had been thought of to preserve the remaining connection;' 'how confusion was to be prevented from the separate action of Parliaments, with distinct and equal powers without any operating centre?'[1]

England was not required to answer by return of mail to questions affecting the integrity of the empire. Time was allowed her to consider, and Portland mean-

[1] 'Lord Shelburne to the Duke of Portland, April 29. Secret.' S. P. O.

while was continuing to feel his way under the surface, and beginning to find men listen to him. He mentioned three or four persons who had been removed from the Privy Council for opposing the Government. He had ascertained, he said, that they could be depended on for the future, and he wished to replace these. It is instructive to find that Mr. Flood was one of them. Stung by his want of success among his old friends, Flood had given signs that he was once more marketable. The Viceroy admitted, however, that he was less certain of him than of the others. 'I must ask a discretionary power,' he wrote, 'in carrying into effect the commands I solicit respecting Mr. Flood. I would not restore him unless I was persuaded he would feel a just sense of the King's goodness to him.' These gentlemen were not all. The Lords and Commons recovering their presence of mind began to bid for favour again with something like the old eagerness. Ireland was not yet independent, and while they had still something to give which England wanted they made the most of the opportunity. So pressing were they and so barefaced that, glad as he was to gain support, he could not quite restrain a solemn astonishment.

'If his majesty's magnanimity and liberality,' he said, 'should influence the Parliament of Great Britain to concede with grace the material point, I believe that the royal favour might be dispensed in this kingdom with a more sparing and economical hand, and that the honour of serving the Crown would take precedence of the emoluments to which I fear the attention of the

King's servants in this kingdom has been of late too much directed.'

Not yet did Portland understand Ireland. He was to discover that so far from a loftier spirit being generated by an emancipated constitution, the shrewd Irish politicians most valued the rights on which they were insisting, as a lever by which to extort a larger price for their services.

May came and England was still pausing on her reply. On the 4th, the Irish Parliament again adjourned for three weeks, and the Duke, presuming on Grattan's patience, tried to persuade him to be content with some 'middle term,' and, perhaps, refer matters to a commission. Assuming that Portland was acting under directions from the Cabinet, and possibly afraid that he might be too successful, Grattan wrote directly to Fox to beg him not to delude himself. Every point must be yielded. He and his friends had pledged their lives and fortunes, and could not and would not give way. 'My country,' he said haughtily, 'must have been much misunderstood if it is thought she has asked for a thing which she cannot give herself. I agree with you in wishing for a settlement, but nothing less than what has been stated will satisfy Ireland. There must be no foreign legislation, no foreign judicature, no legislative council, no negotiation, no commissioners.' [2] To the Viceroy, too, Grattan made

May, 1782

[1] 'To Lord Shelburne, private and confidential, April 21, 1782.' S. P. O.

[2] 'Grattan to Fox, May 6, 1782.'—*Life of Grattan*, vol. ii.

it equally plain that 'middle terms' need not be thought of.

'There is still an appearance of Government,' the Duke reported to Fox, on the 28th of April, 'but if you delay or refuse to be liberal, Government cannot exist here in its present form, and the sooner you recall your lieutenant and renounce all claim to this country the better.'[1] Still more emphatically, and showing how clearly the alternative was before his own mind, and had been considered in the Cabinet before he left England, he wrote on the 6th of May to Lord Shelburne:—

'Every day's experience convinces me not only of the impossibility of prevailing on this country to recede from any one of the claims set forth in the addresses, but of the danger of new ones being started. The hope I expressed of reserving the final judicature, if not totally, at least by retaining a writ of error, no longer exists.' 'It is in vain to argue on the disadvantages which I conceive the alteration of the Act of Henry VII.[2] will produce in this country. The wishes of the people are fixed; and reasoning among ourselves as to what is for or against their interests, is as much too late as it has been fruitless and delusive in respect to other countries. I consider the question is carried. I shall proceed, therefore, to state the plan which I hope might lay the foundation for new relations and permanent friendship. I recommend the positive assurance to be

[1] 'The Duke of Portland to Fox, April 28, 1782.'—*Life of Grattan*, vol. ii.

[2] Poynings' Act.

given them of the alteration of the Mutiny Bill, the modification of Poynings' Act, the repeal of the 6th of George I., writs of error to be no longer issued at our Court of King's Bench. England in return must insist on "a settlement of the precise limits of independence which is required," the consideration which should be given for the protection expended, and the share which Ireland must contribute to the support of the empire. The regulation of trade would very properly make a part of a treaty, and the dissatisfaction expressed by many commercial persons at the delusive advantages of free trade would be a fit subject for discussion.' 'In my apprehension,' Portland went on, 'proposals such as I have stated cannot be resisted in Parliament with any effect. The refusal to accede to them, or to appoint Commissioners for a final adjustment on the ground of their own address, when they are assured that persons are properly authorized for that purpose, *would be such an indication of sinister designs as would warrant your direction to me to throw up the Government and leave them to that fate which their folly and treachery should deserve.* If such should be the sentiments of the King's servants, after using every endeavour to bring them to a sense of their condition, and of the consequences of such a refusal, I should hesitate as little to order the yacht and leave them to be the victims of their own insanity, as I should say that it would be useless to attempt to coerce them, and that the country on such terms would not be worth possessing.'

'I feel the strongest and most poignant reluctance

in being obliged to recommend the mode of relation which I have taken the liberty to suggest. I see no other resource, for I am convinced that the spirit of this country is raised so high, that she would expose herself to any hazard rather than relinquish or retract any of the claims she has insisted on.' 'It is my duty further to state to your lordship *that unless it is determined that the knot which binds the two countries should be severed for ever*, it is necessary I should be authorized as soon as possible to assure the leaders of the Opposition of the intention of the English Administration to exert their influence in convincing the Parliament of Great Britain of the propriety of conceding the points required by the Irish Parliament, for without such assurance it is vain to ask their assistance in any shape whatever.'[1]

Could England have anticipated at this moment the splendid triumphs of her arms with which the war which lost her America was about, notwithstanding, to be closed, the Cabinet might, perhaps, have decided to read Ireland the lesson which she so much needed, and to leave her, as Portland suggested, to be 'the victim of her own insanity.' The United States were free, but the allied powers were to gain little by having espoused their quarrel. At the beginning of the year no light had yet broken on the gloomy prospect. An expedition

[1] 'The Duke of Portland to Lord Shelburne. Secret. May 6.' Abridged. I quote from the original letters of the Duke of Portland in the State Paper Office. Extracts from them were laid by Mr. Pitt before Parliament during the debates on the Union.

against the Dutch at the Cape had failed. Minorca, after a defence only less gallant than Elliott's, had fallen on the 5th of February. Gibraltar held out, but the fate of Minorca was ominous that Gibraltar, too, might not resist for ever. De Grasse had returned, after Cornwallis's surrender, to the West Indies with the united fleets of France and Spain, and one after another the Leeward Islands had surrendered to their overwhelming strength. Jamaica's turn was next to follow. Jamaica, however, was not to be lost without an effort to save it, and Sir George Rodney returned to the West India station with all the force which England could supply. Burke had depreciated Rodney's ability, and on the change of ministry an Admiralty order had been issued for his recall. Before the messenger could sail with it the work had been gloriously finished. Rodney came up with de Grasse on the evening of the 11th of April, forced him into action in the morning, and before nightfall the enormous armament was taken, sunk, or scattered. De Grasse himself was a prisoner, Jamaica was saved, and France was paid home for her share in the capitulation of York Town.

Beaten from the West Indies the French and Spaniards turned all their efforts on Gibraltar. Forty thousand men were collected for a land attack. The ruined trenches were repaired and remounted with 170 guns. The Duc de Crillon, the conqueror of Minorca, took the command. The Comte d'Artois and the Duc de Bourbon came to be present in person at the crowning humiliation which was to fall on the ancient enemy.

Enormous floating batteries, bomb proof against such guns as had been hitherto in use, thronged with men and armed with the largest cannon which skill could construct, were anchored under the batteries, with the combined fleets lying behind to support them. On the morning of the 13th of September, the most terrible bombardment ever borne by a single fortress was opened by sea and land on Elliott and his five thousand English. The rigid blockade now long unrelieved had reduced them to rice and bread, and to half rations of those. The 'roast potatoes' of Gibraltar were the red-hot shot with which Elliott replied to the hail of shell which rained upon him. All the forenoon the balls dropped hissing into the sea from off the impenetrable armour of the floating platforms. As the sun began to slope to the west light columns of smoke were seen ascending from them, first here, then there, and then all along the line. Through telescopes the crews were observed leaving their guns and rushing to and fro with water-buckets, and still the smoke gained upon them, and through the smoke, clearer and brighter as daylight waned, came swirling tongues of flame. The doomed batteries lay incapable of motion, and fiercer yet flew the red shot from the casemates upon them till they became a roaring bank of fire floating on the sea. No answering shell came any longer from their port-holes. The seamen and artillerymen were seen leaping into the water to escape the flames, and struggling back into the flames to escape the water; while at awful intervals magazine after magazine exploded, and in a

September, 1782

glare of lurid splendour, blazing timbers and torn limbs of men were shot as from a volcano into the sulphur-loaded air.

Boats went out from the quay and saved all that could be found alive. The ships of the besiegers lay paralyzed by the appalling ruin, and after that awful night no more attempts were made to drive the English from the rock which they had so magnificently defended. A few days later Lord Howe came with a fleet from England. The French and Spanish squadron, though superior in numbers, dared not face him, and slunk away into their own harbours. The war was ended. The American colonies were lost; but Great Britain still held fast grasped the sceptre which the greatest powers in Europe had in vain sought to tear from her, and sat down with the bloody laurels about her brow still sovereign of the seas.

At such a moment she could have afforded with neither fear nor shame to have granted to Ireland the independence which Grattan threatened that if unconceded Ireland would take for herself. No foreign power could have penetrated the floating patrol with which England could have surrounded her shores, and shut her up within her own limits. Protestant and Catholic, Dissenter and Churchman, Anglo-Irishman and Celt, would have enjoyed to the full the freedom for which they were so clamorous. A few years of liberty on those terms would probably have satisfied Grattan. The mutinous colony would have discovered the meaning of the 'Nationality' which they were so eager to revive,

and such of the population of both races as survived when another Mac Morrough re-invited England's interference, would have been contented to remain for the future members of the British empire on less uneasy terms.

Circumstances forbade the experiment. The victory came too late, and Portland had to yield unconditionally. On the 17th of May, before the news arrived of Rodney's victory, Lord Shelburne and Fox invited the two Houses of the British Parliament to do what Eden had been rebuked for proposing a month before, and repeal the statute of George I. Fox spoke frankly, and, in the main, with truth. He admitted that Ireland had a right to distrust British legislation 'because it had hitherto been employed only to oppress and distress her.' Had she never felt the English power over her as 'a curse' *she would never have complained of it.* Fatally for the interests of both countries, England had used its strength to establish an impolitic monopoly in trade to enrich one at the expense of the other. So lately as but four years since, when the Irish asked to have their rights restored to them, Parliament refused to listen. Demands were disregarded which were no less modest than just. The influence of ministers was exerted against them, perhaps for the purpose of preserving a few votes on other occasions, and the rights and distresses of Ireland were forgotten. Circumstances had changed. The Irish were now ambitious of larger concessions, and he advised that they should be granted. It was not that he was afraid, but he would rather, he said, see Ireland totally

May

separated than kept in obedience by force. He undertook for them, like many an eager statesman before and since, that if they had what they now asked, 'they would be attached to England even to bigotry.'

In neither House was there any opposition. The necessary measures could not be despatched on the instant, but resolutions which would be received as binding were passed, and were forwarded by Lord Shelburne to Portland.

The repeal of the Act of George I., Shelburne said, would remove what the Irish termed the principal cause of their discontent. The Writ of Error would be given up also if they persisted in demanding it. Irish Bills should be no longer altered or suppressed in Council. The Mutiny Bill should be made biennial, and no conditions should be insisted on. The Irish would be expected to make some suitable return, but what the return was to be should be left to their honour, good faith, and generosity. On one point only, to prevent future differences, there must be a distinct understanding. The Cabinet must know what powers were to be reserved to the Crown.[1]

All was now over. The Irish Parliament came together again after the three weeks' adjournment,[2] to hear from the Viceroy's lips that England had given way on the four points, and that they had obtained their desire. The announcement was conveyed with the more dignity that it was accompanied with the accounts which had now come in from the West Indies.

[1] 'Shelburne to Portland, May 18, 1782.' S. P. O. [2] May 27.

In the ecstasy of joy into which Ireland precipitated herself, it seemed as if Fox's anticipations were really to be fulfilled. Sir Lucius O'Brien exclaimed that the strength of three millions of people was added to the British standard. Cordial now, as before he had been determined, Grattan grasped England's hand as of a recovered friend. Confidence in Ireland's honour should never be placed in vain. 'We were pledged to recover our rights,' he said. 'We are now pledged to Great Britain, which, by acceding to our claims, has put an end to all further questions.' England's victories were now Ireland's. Ireland should have a share in all her future glories. Mr. Grattan concluded by moving for a grant, which was conceded instantly, of a hundred thousand pounds and twenty thousand seamen as a contribution to the navy of Great Britain.

When the exultation over the political triumph was exhausted, the next thought was of the hero by whom it had been won. Mr. Bagenal, the same who fought De Blaquiere, moved for a committee to purchase an estate and build a suitable mansion for Ireland's illustrious benefactor, Henry Grattan.

Far be it from me,' said the enthusiastic gentleman, 'to compare even the services of a Marlborough to those for which we stand indebted. We have no deductions to make from our gratitude. Without superstition, men may well record him among the most prosperous interpositions of Heaven.'[1]

[1] *Irish Debates*, May 27, 1782.

Grattan rose to protest, but his voice was drowned in shouts of 'Adjourn.' A day was appointed for a general thanksgiving. An address of gratitude was voted to the Crown, and addresses of thanks and congratulations to Portland and to Rodney. But the first thought of every one was, 'What should a generous country do for Grattan?' The Duke was as bitter at the meditated profusion as if the revenue was a fund sacred to Parliamentary corruption.

'Such is the inattention to the distressed circumstances of the country,' he said, 'that some management was necessary to keep this idea within bounds. I tried, but ineffectually, to have confined them to a recommendation of Mr. Grattan to the favour of the Crown, or at least to have got the quantum of reward left to his majesty. I next endeavoured for their own sakes to prevail on them to adopt the mode of annuity to Mr. Grattan and his heirs, and on its being represented that a house was necessary as well as an income, I expressed my readiness to request his majesty to permit the Lodge lately contracted for in the Phœnix Park for the summer residence of the Lord-Lieutenant to be settled on Mr. Grattan. For this I was the more anxious as, in addition to the very extravagant price which the public have agreed to pay for it, I am persuaded that it will require at least 10,000*l.* more to make it fit for the reception of the chief governor. No argument, however, would avail, and nothing would have prevented the vote in favour of Mr. Grattan, amounting to as large a sum as, or possibly exceeding, that given towards

raising seamen (100,000*l.*), but the interposition and firmness of Mr. Grattan's own particular friends, who assured the House Mr. Grattan would certainly refuse so glaring a mark of profusion.'[1]

Fifty thousand pounds was the sum at last agreed on, with a further grant for a house, many members, however, still raising their voices in protest. Mr. Ogle, of Wexford, hoped that Ireland was not imitating Athens, which rewarded Miltiades with a picture. The Provost, flying into rhetoric in his old days, said that Chatham had received four thousand a year for his own life and his son's, and 'great as were the abilities of Chatham he was less deserving than the object of the present motion.'

Grattan himself lent no countenance to this idle adulation. He accepted his 50,000*l.* as a retaining fee, and declared that thenceforth his services were mortgaged to Ireland. He would accept no office and enter into no engagement which might embarrass him in his duty to his country. June

Nothing now remained but to celebrate in some fitting way the birthday of Irish nationality. Unhappily, as an Irish patriotic writer exclaims on the occasion, 'it was written in the book of fate that the felicity of Ireland should be short-lived.' Grattan had been modest in his victory, however unscrupulous the means by which he obtained it; and however worthless it was ultimately to prove, in the eyes of the Irish nation it was of infinite

[1] 'The Duke of Portland to Lord Shelburne, June 5, 1782.' S. P. O.

value. Had he consented to a compromise he could not have named a reward too high for Rockingham and Portland to have thrust upon him. Even patriots cannot subsist on air, and in allowing a modest provision to be settled upon him, Mr. Grattan was rather conferring an honour than receiving a favour. So every rational person must have regarded the grant of the Parliament, but there were members of the House of Commons who were not rational. Was Grattan to have a splendid reward, and was the antagonist of Lord Townshend, who had fought for Ireland when Grattan was a child, was Henry Flood, the veteran warrior of liberty, to have nothing? Mr. Montgomery, of Donegal, rose to remind the House 'of the best, the most able, the most indefatigable, the most sincere man that had ever sacrificed private interest to the advantage of his country; who had relinquished the most lucrative office in the State rather than desert the constitution of Ireland.' He moved an address to the King, to restore Flood to the Vice-Treasurership. 'He would not move,' he said, 'for a pecuniary reward, as he knew the right hon. gentleman was above receiving an alms from his country.'

The advocacy of Flood did not require an insult to Grattan, an insult the more uncalled for as Grattan was at once poor and profusely generous, and Flood had a large private fortune. The House listened with surprise and annoyance. Colonel Fitzpatrick, the Secretary, seeing how bad an effect Montgomery had produced, replied coldly that the Vice-Treasurership was no longer vacant.

Montgomery did not improve his friend's chances by his rejoinder. 'He had indeed heard,' he said, 'that the place had been bestowed on a certain insignificant and contemptible Sir George Yonge, whose ill-offices to Ireland might possibly at some time be properly rewarded,' but at present Sir George Yonge might be required to give way.

Fitzpatrick placed himself in the hands of the House. If the House pleased to vote an address to remove Sir George Yonge in Mr. Flood's favour, he said he could make no objection.

But now up started Sir George Yonge's friends, among them Sir Henry Cavendish, a noted fire-eater, as the reader will remember. 'The charges against that gentleman,' Sir Henry said, 'he would prove false, false, false, absolutely false verbatim et literatim.'

Following so immediately on the grand movement which was to give Ireland a renewal of life, this outburst of feeling was unlucky and unpromising. What followed was very much worse. Had Flood's pretensions been modestly put forward, the House would very likely have supported them. Introduced as they had been introduced by Montgomery, his claims were ignored and thrust aside. Those who had once hung upon his lips slighted him. He had lost the office for which he was so anxious. His advances to Portland had not recovered for him his seat in the Council, and he was childishly disappointed. With a transparent jealousy he looked for flaws in Grattan's workmanship. He discovered that after all both Grattan and the House of Commons

were the dupes of English cunning, and if within the walls of the House he counted but few followers, he found credulous listeners in the Volunteers and the mob, whose suspicions were ready to kindle at every word uttered against the hereditary oppressors.

At Ireland's desire England had repealed the 6th of George I. Mr. Flood insisted that the repeal was nothing, because what England surrendered England might resume. He required, and the Volunteers echoed his demand, that the British Parliament should pass a special Act renouncing for ever all pretence of legislating for Ireland. It was obvious folly, for one Parliament could not bind its successor. An Act which one Parliament passed another might repeal. Nay, the very appeal to Britain to renounce a right implied that it at present existed.

'If the security which the honourable gentleman desires be a British statute,' said Grattan, 'I reject it. I would reject Magna Charta under a British statute. We have not come to England for a charter but with a charter, and we have asked her to cancel all her declarations made in opposition to it. This is the true idea of the situation of Ireland. If we go on with a spirit of insatiety, supposing ideal dangers, we may find food for perpetual discontent.'

Grattan, too, was hereafter to find food for discontent on equally imaginary grounds, but compared with Flood he was sane. The sense and nonsense of the House of Commons alike condemned an absurd outburst, which was so plainly the creation of spleen and envy.

The 6th of George I., said Yelverton, asserts the power of the British Legislature to bind Ireland. The repeal of the law is a renunciation as plain as words can make it.

'Our asking a renunciation,' said Bagenal, with an illustration too familiar to Irish experience, 'would be the revival of the claim. A woman is violated. A man usurps the powers of a husband, gives out she is his wife, lavishes her fortune upon prostitutes, at last abandons her. Is it prudent of that woman to sue for a divorce? Might not such a suit be pleaded in proof of a claim of which no other evidence can be produced?'

Nothing satisfied Flood. He replied with a tempest of words which raged for hours and ended in a shriek.

'Was the voice with which I utter this,' he said, 'the last effort of expiring nature; was the accent which conveys it to you the breath which was to waft me to that grave to which we all tend, and to which my footsteps rapidly accelerate, I would go on; I would make my exit by a loud demand of your rights.'

Oratory is the saddest of efforts when the audience is out of sympathy with the speaker. The House knew Flood and knew his motives. They would not have the renunciation in any form. Leave was asked to bring in a Bill declaring the sole and exclusive right of the Irish Parliament to make laws in all cases whatever, internal or external, for the kingdom of Ireland. Such a Bill, had it been passed, would have given Ireland separate foreign relations, and a complete separate code of com-

mercial policy. The House rejected it without a division. But the House stultified itself immediately after by resolving 'that leave had been refused because the exclusive right of legislation in the Irish Parliament in all cases, *internal and external*, had been already asserted by Ireland and fully, irrevocably, and finally acknowledged by England.'[1]

They had rushed in the wild haste of enthusiasm into what they called constitutional liberty; and ere it was a month old, they were quarrelling over its limits, and were unable to say clearly what rights they had gained, or in what their liberty consisted.

In the midst of their differences, however, they had not neglected important work, and many measures—some foolish, some excellent, and too long delayed—were swept through by the impetuous torrent of this memorable session. Poynings' Act was shaken off. Heads of intended Bills were no longer submitted to the Privy Councils of England and Ireland to be amended or approved before they could take the form of laws, and as such be voted upon. The Irish Parliament drew its Bills like the English Parliament, for the Crown to accept or reject. The process was simplified. A power, which had been abused, was abolished; but a precaution, which for 300 years had prevented a direct collision between the Legislatures of the two countries, no longer existed. The Writs of Error, by which disputed causes might be transferred by appeal from the Irish to the English courts of law, ceased to be issued. The Irish

[1] *Irish Debates*, June 19, 1782. *Commons' Journals*, Ibid.

House of Peers was made the final court of appeal in Irish cases, with a result which was tragically apparent on the first important question which came before the jurisdiction of that tribunal. The two Catholic Relief Bills, introduced by Mr. Gardiner, were carried. Catholics might now purchase freeholds like other subjects, open schools and educate their children when and how they pleased. Their stables were no longer open to inspection, or their horses above the value of five pounds liable to be seized by the Government, or taken from them by informers.[1] A cheap and inonerous system of registration was adopted for the Catholic priests; and the Acts which in any shape interfered with the freedom of religious worship were repealed.[2] The Habeas Corpus Act, so long withheld, was conceded. The tenure of the Irish judges was placed at last on the English level. Presbyterian marriages, so long and so bitterly disputed by the bishops, were made valid in law. The Perpetual Mutiny Act, fought over with so much obstinacy, became biennial, and the Irish Parliament acquired constitutional control over the Irish military establishments.

Now, at last, all obstacles to the Irish millennium were gone; every measure had been granted which the people had demanded as necessary to their happiness. The new era might now begin, and the business of the

[1] The horses of Mr. Wyse were once taken from him under the Penal Act, from a plea of some anticipated disturbance. Wyse the next day, like another Jason, drove his carriage into Waterford with four bulls.

[2] 21 & 22 George III. c. 24, s. 62. Irish statutes.

year was wound up by an address of congratulation to the Duke of Portland, drawn by Grattan himself.

'We have seen,' so the address said, 'the judges rendered independent of the Crown; the mutiny law abridged in duration; the jurisdiction of the hereditary judges of the land restored; the vicious mode of passing laws in this land reformed; the sole and exclusive right of legislation, external as well as internal, in the Irish Parliament firmly asserted on the part of Ireland and unequivocally acknowledged on the part of Great Britain. We have seen this great national arrangement established on a basis which secures the tranquillity of Ireland, and unites the affections as well as the interests of both kingdoms. The name of Bentinck will remain engraved on our hearts; and whenever your Grace shall withdraw from the administration of the affairs of this country, you will be attended, not by forced and jaded benedictions, but by the manly and dignified love of a free people.'

A last effort was made by Flood to disturb the general harmony. He moved an amendment, that England's concessions were still insufficient, for the English Parliament had still power to revoke them; and 'that the people of Ireland were growing more and more of that opinion.' It was perfectly true, and the difficulty rose from the nature of the case, which nothing which Mr. Flood might do could remedy. So long as England was the stronger country, prudence and respect for her engagements could alone prevent her from asserting her superiority. The dead could not bind the living, and

each generation would have its own view of its obligations. It will be seen that the Parliament of Great Britain humoured afterwards the nervous sensitiveness of Ireland so far as to paint the lily, and to confirm its acts by further words of assurance; but no additional promises could add strength to the engagements to which the honour of the existing representation was pledged already. The Irish Parliament refused for the present to allow Mr. Flood to alarm it. His amendment was rejected. His attempt to supplant Grattan in the confidence of the House of Commons by affectation of superior discernment was a decisive failure; and unable to endure the spectacle of his rival's triumph, and of the national exultation, which he had not been the instrument of producing, he left the country and went to England.

'His objects,' wrote Portland, 'are to me, and I believe to everyone else, a perfect secret. Although his character is so well known, I think it my duty to apprise the Cabinet of his arrival, and to give it, as my opinion, that his ambition is so immeasurable that no dependence can be placed upon any engagements which he may be induced to form.' [1]

Adoring friends took charge of his reputation in his absence. Beside the Duke's disparaging comments may be placed a sketch of Flood presented to an ungrateful House of Commons by Martin, the member for James Town.

[1] 'Duke of Portland to Secretary Townshend, August 9, 1792.' S. P. O.

'Mr. Flood is the greatest character that has ever adorned this country; a character not to be profaned by the tongue of impious men; whose name will die only when our constitution expires, whose transcendent abilities will be handed down to posterity while the history of this planet shall be read; the present adoration of this age, whose death will hereafter be lamented as the bitterest calamity with which an angry heaven has visited this island, whose transcendent merit is such that it keeps the merit of every other man at an awful and respectful distance, whose abilities are of such a godlike nature, that I protest, if ever I shall stand forward, the advocate of the present era, I shall do it by telling my son, if God shall ever bless me with a child, that the period in which I existed was preferable to that in which he may live, because I lived in the same era and had the honour to be born in the same country with that great man.'[1]

Mr. Flood had still nine years of public life before him, in which to show whether his admirers or his detractors had formed the clearer estimate of his character. Meantime a chapter of Irish history had been closed, a fresh page turned, and the floor swept clean for the opening of a new epoch. In July Lord Rockingham died. Fox and his immediate followers retired from the Cabinet; and Shelburne became Prime Minister, with William Pitt for Chancellor of the Exchequer. The Duke of Portland having done his

[1] *Irish Debates*, 1782.

work was glad to leave the scene of his eventful labours, while the halcyon days of hope were still unclouded; and Lord Temple, who had married the heiress of the Nugents, and was then the representative of a great Irish house, was chosen for the first Viceroy of the emancipated Ireland.

BOOK VII.

CHAPTER I.

THE CONVENTION.

SECTION I.

MR. GRATTAN had created a nation, but from the haste with which the infant had been brought to birth its limbs were half formed and its constitution critical. The Catholics recovered their civil rights, but Ireland was still politically Protestant. The connection with England was reduced to the tie of the common sovereign. The Irish Parliament claimed an independent power of legislation, external as well as internal. Was Ireland to have a separate foreign policy,[1] her own Ministers at foreign courts, her own consuls at the ports where she sold her merchandise? Was she to create a navy of her own to defend her interests on the high seas? Was she to

1782

[1] 'The Irish Parliament was, in fact, ambitious of having a voice in matters of peace or war, and hinted as much at the time when peace was made. "If," Lord North properly replied, "the King was to take the advice of the Irish Parliament in matters relating to war and peace, the utmost confusion must be the consequence." —'Lord North to the Earl of Northington, November 3, 1783.' S. P. O.

maintain cruisers to protect her coasts from smugglers? Or if she was still to depend on the British navy, was she to contribute a specified sum to the support of it, or was she to be left always, as in the late session, to 'her own generosity?' Her incipient manufactures were said to require protection. Was she to be allowed to lay prohibitive duties on competing English goods, and if so, was England to be bound under the terms of the linen compact to exclude the linens of Russia and Germany from her markets, while she admitted the produce of the Irish looms duty-free? Again, was Ireland to have a share in the close trade of Great Britain with her colonies, while she refused Great Britain a voice in the terms on which the trade was to be carried on? These points and many others lay within the legislative limits which had been challenged by the Irish patriots. The constitution of 1782 would have possessed more vitality if the period of gestation had been prolonged till the statesmen of both countries had considered and provided for them. But the sanguine Irish temperament was impatient of delay. The opportunity was seized when patriotism was at fever heat. The favourable moment, once lost, might never have returned.

Nor was it only on the side of the relations with England that difficulties threatened to arise. The Dungannon resolutions had declared that the King, Lords, and Commons of Ireland had alone a right to pass laws which Irishmen were bound to obey. Yet beside King, Lords, and Commons there existed still a

rival authority, created by the Irish people themselves, whose function it was to keep Parliament to its work. In the Phœnix Park were seen daily exercising the Artillery companies of an army which, being the representative of the national strength of Ireland, was, in its own opinion, the guardian of her liberties, the ultimate expression of the national mind, and only responsible to itself.

With the peace the excuse had ceased for the existence of the Volunteers. But the Volunteers showed no disposition to disband. When the session of 1782 ended, the number on the rolls was 130 000. There were, perhaps, 50,000 with the colours. The Volunteer army in theory was purely Protestant. Catholics were still forbidden to possess arms. But the Catholics had subscribed liberally, and in the general enthusiasm the opinions of the rank and file had not been looked into too curiously. Thus this singular body, which in the judgment of Irishmen was the wonder of mankind, and had raised their country to a level with the great military powers of Europe, had become what the Parliament was not—a substantially national institution, and possessed and preserved alone the confidence of the people.

The composition of the force deserves more particular notice. It had been raised by private subscription, or at the expense of enthusiastic individuals. There was no system of general finance; there were no stores, no arsenal, no commissariat. In the towns there were lawyers' corps, doctors' corps, shopkeepers' corps, mer-

chants' corps, artisan corps. The cavalry companies were mounted, officered, and accoutred by the country gentlemen from their household servants, farm-servants, and tenants, and the cost was provided by mortgages on their lands. It was said in Ireland that when the heir of an estate came of age money was raised to pay off encumbrances. The money was had and was spent, but from some cause the encumbrances remained. Light-hearted, extravagant, all living beyond their means, the gentlemen of Ireland had 'fewer cares than any people in the world.' 'Debt,' says Sir Jonah Barrington, 'gave new zest to the dissipation which created it.' Adored by their dependents, so long as they practised no economy and did not vex them with improvements or increase of rents, they lived from hand to mouth, taking no thought for the morrow; while the humblest peasant on the estate knew no law but the master's word, and was ready to defy in his name all the constables and bailiffs of the land. Out of such a following a Volunteer regiment was easily formed. A mortgage, more or less, mattered little, and with the prospect of the boundless wealth which was to flow into Ireland with the attainment of liberty, was regarded as a promising investment. Each gentleman vied with his neighbour in the splendour with which he could bring his corps to a review. Mounted squadrons wheeled and caracoled in all the hues of the birds of the tropics—green and scarlet, white and blue, gold and silver. Too curious enquiry may, perhaps, trace the last effects of the effervescence in the disappearance of many names

from the roll of the Irish gentry. The brief blaze of glory was extinguished in bankruptcy.

Lord Charlemont commanded in chief; the Duke of Leinster in his own province. Guards were mounted at the gates of these two noblemen. Escorts followed them in the streets. Sentinels stood at the doors of their boxes when they visited the theatres. Yet, with all this magnificence, the regiments could not be moved two days' march from their homes, and the functions which they combined of soldiers and politicians necessitated the placing persons in high commands who were fitter for debating clubs than for the field. The colonel of the Phœnix Park Artillery Corps, for instance, was a Dublin ironmonger, named Napper Tandy, who had pushed himself into notoriety as the bullying demagogue of the corporation; small, ugly, ill-shaped, with no talent but for speech; a coward in action, a noisy fool in council. Homer had drawn Napper's portrait three thousand years before in 'Thersites.'

The corps officered by the gentry, too, might have been found wanting in time of trial for other causes.

Mr. Bagenal, an enthusiastic admirer of Grattan, had been among the most active promoters of the Volunteer movement. Beauchamp Bagenal was the 'Admirable Crichton' of his day—the preceptor and shining example of the rising generation of aspiring Irishmen.[1] He had inherited a large fortune. He had

[1] He was the most notorious duellist of his day. He had called out De Blaquiere only to try his mettle. He occasionally submitted his younger friends to the same test. His relation and godson,

travelled in splendour on the Continent, had fought a prince, jilted a princess, run away with a Spanish duchess, broken into a convent in search of a nun, made the Doge of Venice drunk, and performed fifty other exploits no less extraordinary. When the Volunteers began to arm, none were more forward with help and encouragement than Beauchamp Bagenal. Jonah Barrington was present when he reviewed the Carlow and Kilkenny regiments in his park at Dunleckny. He drove between the lines in an open carriage with six horses, a bottle of claret in one hand and a glass in the other, drinking the officers' healths. The officers were called up singly to the side of the carriage, and were made to drain a tumbler of claret in turn to the Volunteers of Ireland. In the evening there was a ball and supper at the house. The rank and file for whom there was no room under the roof camped out in the summer night with unlimited wine and whisky; and in the morning the park was like a field of battle, strewed over with prostrate bodies, unable to move—'the most curious exhibition,' observes Sir Jonah, 'which could be

---

Bagenal Harvey, who was hanged afterwards for treason, was once staying with him at his house at Dunleckny. The old gentleman took his guest out for a walk one morning in the park, fastened some absurd quarrel upon him, produced pistols, and forced him to fight. Bagenal Harvey, finding there was no escape, did the best that he could for himself, took a steady aim, and sent a ball through Beauchamp Bagenal's coat. Instead of shooting at him in return, old Bagenal exclaimed, 'You damned young villain! you had like to have killed your godfather; yes, you dog, or your father, too, for anything I know to the contrary. I only wanted to see if you were brave. Go in, and order breakfast. I shall be at home directly.'

conceived by persons not accustomed to those days of dissipation.'

The existence of a large force, so constructed and so disciplined, was an awkward feature in a young Constitution, not the less so that the political self-confidence of the Volunteers was on a level with their estimate of themselves as soldiers; and that they were aware that, except for them, the Constitution would never have come into being. Business was at a standstill. The artisan had left his home, the farmer his fields, the lawyer his chambers—all to regenerate their country. They had no misgivings as to their own capacity, and they did not mean to go back to their ordinary callings till the country was regenerated to their minds. As Denis Daly expressed himself to Grattan—

'The Volunteers are ready to determine any question in the whole circle of the sciences which shall be proposed to them, and to burn any unfortunate person that doubts their infallibility.'

SECTION II.

The armed guardians of Irish liberty had occasion to be watchful. The Irish Parliament, in its first exuberance of gratitude, had voted 2000 men for the naval service. On the conclusion of peace, many ships were put out of commission. The additional seamen were unneeded, and it was suggested that 5000 out of the whole number should be formed into regiments for service on land. The Argus-eyes of the Volunteers discovered in the proposal an insidious purpose of restoring the regular army to its full complement, as a step towards dispensing with their services. Lord Temple, who arrived at the Castle to find himself sitting on a volcano, was obliged to deprecate with the most passionate earnestness so dangerous a scheme.[1] 1782

A people on the watch for treachery see malignant designs in the most innocent accidents. The first alarm had no sooner subsided, than a fresh aggression set the country in a flame. Irish causes, it had been agreed, were for the future to be decided in the Irish courts. An outstanding Irish case which had been long since carried by appeal to England, came on in the King's

[1] 'I do not hesitate to assert that such a proposal, even if it was warranted by the terms of the vote —which, in fact, is not the case— would entirely annihilate every chance of raising a further body of men for the sea service. Lord Temple to Secretary Townshend. Secret and private. September 21, 1782.' S. P. O.

Bench in the Autumn Term of 1782, and Lord Mansfield gave judgment upon it. The Irish, who owed the recovery of their privileges to circumstances which no longer existed, were on the watch for symptoms that England meant again to enslave them. A people can afford to be calm who, in possession of their natural rights, feel that if assailed they can maintain them by force. The Irish had no such confidence. The Volunteers who had already taken Flood's side against Grattan on the insufficiency of the late concession, shrieked immediately that Ireland was betrayed.

1783

Temple, in despair, appeared to share their suspicions. 'Having struggled,' he said, 'in resisting ideal grievances, I could not explain away this business. I do not wonder at the ferment into which all ranks of people are thrown. England is obliged by every tie of natural faith to complete a compact which is clearly incomplete.' Something, he insisted, must be done, and done instantly, to compose the alarm, even if an Act of Parliament had to be passed to annul Lord Mansfield's decision.[1] Innocent of the faintest design to disturb Ireland's peace of mind, Lord Shelburne's Cabinet professed its willingness to do whatever she desired. The judgment had been given on a case already before the English Court. The situation could not recur, for writs of error being no longer issued, no more cases could be referred. Yet whatever satisfaction Ireland demanded they were ready to give. The ad-

[1] 'Lord Temple to Secretary Townshend, November 20. Most secret.' S. P. O.

vanced patriots asked for Flood's Renunciation Bill. Flood's 'Renunciation Bill' they should have, and Mr. Townshend introduced a bill into the British Parliament for 'removing doubts' and affirming the final competence of the Irish Courts in all cases whatever,[1] William Grenville, Lord Temple's secretary, coming over to explain and support the Irish plea.

In both Houses during the passage of this Bill the position in which Ireland was placing herself was naturally remarked upon. Lord Aberdeen enquired whether the Irish tie was to be no more than the Hanoverian, or whether the Irish people were still subjects of the British Crown. If they were to be on the footing of the Hanoverians, they were aliens and could not sit in the British Legislature. A union was hinted at as the best solution of the problem, and though the Renunciation Bill was carried, it was carried against the opinions of Fox and of the Duke of Portland.

To smooth the ruffled waters and gratify the national vanity, Lord Temple instituted in March the new order of the Knights of St. Patrick. On the 17th, St. Patrick's Day, the leading members of the Irish aristocracy were installed with becoming magnificence. But the Volunteers were not to be caught with gilded chaff or compliments to the peerage. They had serious business still on hand. Lord Shelburne went out of office. The Coalition Government came in with Portland at its head, and Fox and North as joint Secretaries of State. The anomaly, in many ways absurd, was less mischievous as

[1] 23 George III. cap. 28.

it affected Ireland, for Portland, who knew the secret history of the transactions of 1782, was resolute to give way no further. He saw that Temple was made of too soft material to deal successfully with an unreasonable people. He recalled him in spite of the outcry that he was taking away Ireland's friend, and Robert Henley, Earl of Northington, was sent in his place to open Parliament for the autumn session.

July, 1783

Under the Octennial Act, the Parliament elected in 1776 had still a year's life in it, but the alteration of the constitution had changed the relations between the Legislature and the Castle. Their increased independence enabled both Peers and Commoners to command higher terms for their support, and Lord Northington found on his arrival a general demand for a dissolution. The old system, it was very evident, was not only to continue, but to flourish with added vigour. Larger liberty among men who had not earned it by their own virtue meant, what, under such circumstances, it must always mean, larger folly and grosser corruption.

No disguise was attempted, no affectation of turning away the eyes, while the bribe was silently accepted. 'I am met,' Lord Northington wrote, 'with pretensions and claims of various natures which I would gladly have had more time to consider, to arrange the interests, satisfy the expectations of the claimants, and acquire the strength which Government ought to have at the opening of a new Parliament. I have no reason to feel much anxiety with regard to the strength which

is to be obtained by the support of considerable interests, as I have received flattering assurances of their good disposition.'[1]

In one quarter only, and where he had least looked for it, the Viceroy encountered difficulties. The boroughs belonging to the bishops the Castle had always regarded as Crown property, 'as providing opportunities of bringing into Parliament persons connected with the Government.' The new ideas of liberty had reached the Right Reverend Bench. The Bishops of Ferns and Ossory when applied to in the usual way answered 'that their seats were already disposed of.' Was the English lion so dead that even the bench could spurn at it? Northington wrote for instructions 'in so extraordinary a case.' 'Was he to signify to those prelates his majesty's disapprobation of their conduct?'

'The King is unwilling to interfere,' Lord North replied, 'but he agrees with your Excellency that it is extremely improper conduct.'[2]

A Parliament elected under the influence of lords and gentlemen who were seeking visibly their personal interests, was not likely to be satisfactory to Ireland in its existing state of inflation. There had been a bad harvest. The potato crop had failed; work of all kinds had been neglected in the mania for volunteering; and instead of a millennium, in spite of the Renunciation

[1] 'The Earl of Northington to Lord North, July 1, 1783.'

[2] 'The Earl of Northington to Lord North, July 1. Lord North to the Earl of Northington, July 11, 1783.' S. P. O.

Bill, there was a prospect of absolute famine. The most mischievous consequence of a really unjust legislation, such as Ireland had suffered under before the removal of the trade restrictions, is that it teaches people to look to political changes as a sure remedy for what is amiss with them. Ireland had really no industrial grievance left. She needed only quiet and hard work to become as prosperous as Scotland or England. Political agitation was an easier, and, as the Irish believed, a more certain road to renovation. Pitt had begun to speak in England of a reform of Parliament. Ireland, too, began to talk of reforming her Parliament. The Constitution of '82 had been believed to be the crest of the mountain till it was achieved. From the brow of the ridge another peak had come into sight. All would not be well, indeed nothing would be well, without a free legislature and a free constitution. The Irish House of Commons was undoubtedly an absurd caricature. If Ireland was to be governed by a Parliament at all, it could not be other than a caricature, so long as the connection with England was maintained. The majority of the Irish people desired entire independence. An assembly which fairly represented them would reflect wishes which could be realized only by separation, and, therefore, any assembly calling itself representative must in a greater or less degree be an unreality so long as the connection with England continued. The privilege asserted and obtained for the Irish Parliament in the late changes made the retention of political power in the hands of those who were amen-

able to influence more than ever a constitutional necessity. To reform the House of Commons was avowedly to give power to those classes who demanded objects incompatible with dependence on the English Crown, to precipitate internal quarrels, and bring about either total separation or a forced incorporation in the Empire. The House as it stood was formed exclusively of Protestants. The experiment of an assembly composed of representatives of both creeds had been tried and had failed. The House was formed also almost exclusively of Protestants of the Established Church. The Presbyterians were not disfranchised, but their county influence was small, and in the boroughs the members were returned usually by the corporations from which they had been hitherto excluded by the Test Act. Two members sate for each of the 32 counties. The boroughs and cities returned 236. The county electors were free, subject only to the influence of the landowners. Sixty borough seats were partially free; *i. e.* the electors, if careless of consequences, might, by an effort, make an independent choice. A hundred and seventy-six seats out of the whole number of three hundred, were the property of bishops, peers, and commoners. They were bought and sold without disguise. The perpetual advowson (if the phrase may be used) of a borough was worth eight or nine thousand pounds. A single seat in a single Parliament could be had for 2000*l.*, and the purchaser avowedly intended to recoup himself by the sale of his vote. Under such a system the Volunteers discovered that the victory which they had achieved

was valueless. The Castle, with its patronage and its pension list, would always be too much for them. Accident had enabled them to obtain free trade and the free constitution, but the conditions favourable to them might never recur. The net would again close round them and they would be slaves once more. The Volunteers saw the danger to their liberties; experience had painfully taught them that England, if she recovered her authority, might again abuse it. And they were possessed with the flattering illusion which was pervading the air of Europe, that public virtue is not the parent of liberty, but its child; that to emancipate a people from control, and place the power of the State in their hands, was to raise their character to a level with their new duties, and unlock all the gates to them which led to prosperity and happiness.

There is no word in human language which so charms the ear as liberty. There is no word which so little pains have been taken to define, or which is used to express ideas more opposite. There is a liberty which is the liberty of a child or a savage, the liberty of animals, the vagrant liberty, which obeys no restraint, for it is conscious of no obligation. There is a liberty which arises from the subjugation of self and the control of circumstances, which consists in knowledge of what ought to be done, and a power to do it obtained by patient labour and discipline. The artisan or the artist learns in an apprenticeship under the guidance of others to conquer the difficulties of his profession. When the conquest is complete he is free. He has liberty—he

commands his tools, he commands his own faculties. He has become a master.

It is with life as a whole, as with the occupations into which life is divided. Those only are free *men* who have had patience to learn the conditions of a useful and honourable existence, who have overcome their own ignorance and their own selfishness, who have become masters of themselves.

The first liberty is the liberty of anarchy, which to a *man* should be a supreme object of detestation. The second liberty is the liberty of law, which has made the name the symbol of honour, and has made the thing the supreme object of desire. But the enthusiasm for true liberty has in these modern times been transferred to its opposite. With a singular inversion of cause and effect, men have seen in liberty not the exercise and the reward of virtues which have been acquired under restraint, but some natural fountain, a draught from which is to operate as a spell for the regeneration of our nature. Freedom as they picture it to themselves is like air and light, a condition in which the seeds of excellence are alone able to germinate. Who is free? asked the ancient sage, and he answered his own question. 'The wise man who is master of himself.' Who is free? asks the modern liberal politician, and he answers, the man who has a voice in making the laws which he is expected to obey. Does the freedom of a painter consist in his having himself consented to the laws of perspective, and light and shade? That nation is the most free where the

laws, by whomsoever framed, correspond most nearly to the will of the Maker of the universe, by whom, and not by human suffrage, the code of rules is laid down for our obedience. That nation is most a slave which has ceased to believe that such divinely appointed laws exist, and will only be bound by the Acts which it places on its statute-book.

Considerations like these were too homely for the minds of practical politicians of the eighteenth century. The world was growing weary of its aristocracies. Political reform was the cry of the hour, and it must be allowed for the Irish enthusiasts that there was no country in Europe in which the ruling families had made a worse use of the power committed to them. The further the secrets of Irish administration are looked into the more uniform the spectacle; noble lords and gentlemen recruiting the fortunes which they had ruined in idle extravagance by selling their political influence, while their special duties as guardians of the law and rulers over their tenantry were not only undischarged, but not so much as known to exist.

Pitt was moving with his own ends. The Volunteers followed the example for theirs. Delegates met throughout the summer at Belfast and Lisburn. Schemes were sent out, and outlines of them scattered for approval through the southern provinces. The first convention at Dungannon had succeeded so brilliantly that a second was determined on, to be held at the same place on the 8th of September.

As a preparation for this meeting an address was

issued to the Volunteer army of Ulster. They were informed 'that the Imperial Crown of Ireland had been restored by their efforts to its original splendour, and the nation to its inherent rights as an independent State;' 'the distracted inhabitants had been united in an indissoluble bond through an unparalleled combination of the civil and military authority;' 'it now remained to abolish the courtly mercenaries who preyed on the vitals of public virtue, and prevent the return of venal majorities to support dishonourable measures.'

When September arrived the delegates came together, representatives of 270 companies; and this time, unprompted by Grattan, they set out of their own accord the symbol or formula of their new faith. September.

1. 'Freedom,' these philosophers had discovered, 'is the indefeasible right of Irishmen and Britons, derived from the Author of their being, of which no power on earth has a right to deprive them.' They did not say in what freedom consisted, or where, or in what way, God Almighty had bestowed it on them. They merely insisted on the fact as a preliminary article of faith.

2. 'Those only are free,' they went on, 'who are governed by no laws but those to which they assent either in person or by their representatives freely chosen.' If this was true, minorities who protest against laws passed by a majority are either entitled to disobey, or they are deprived of what the first resolution declared to be their inalienable right.

3. 'The elective franchise shall extend to those,

and those only, who will exercise it for the public good.' The elective franchise, by the old laws of Europe, belonged to the freemen: to those who in some practical department of life had proved their competence as masters of their craft. Who, on the principles of the Dungannon delegates, could decide on the fitness of the electors, or the meaning of the words public good?

Yet these propositions appeared to the soldier statesmen at Dungannon to be axioms which could form the basis of a revolution. By the light of them they framed a list of reforms which were required in the representation. Till these reforms were granted, they insisted on a refusal of the supplies by the House of Commons; and to hold the House of Commons to its work they concluded to choose delegates from the Volunteers of every county in Ireland, who should meet and sit in Dublin simultaneously with the Parliament—a second legislative assembly—to guide, and if necessary to control and overawe, the constitutional chambers.

Characteristic as these resolutions were in themselves, they were the more noteworthy from the persons with whom they originated. The leading spirits of the second meeting at Dungannon were Lord Charlemont and Lord Farnham, Sir Capel Molyneux, Colonel Stewart of Down,[1] the Bishop of Derry, Tom Conolly, and Colonel Montgomery. Noblemen and gentlemen of high character and station could deliberately recommend the constitution of a military convention to meet

[1] Afterwards Marquis of Londonderry, and father of Lord Castlereagh.

at the capital, and dictate measures to an unwilling Parliament in the name of the national army. They could even persuade themselves that they were engaged in a sacred service,[1] and they closed their proceedings with an appeal to the Supreme Ruler of the Universe, and with special thanks to his minister, the Bishop of Derry, the steady friend of Ireland.

[1] They described the convention 'as a solemn act of the Volunteer army of Ireland to demand rights without which the unanimated forms of a free government would be a curse, and existence cease to be a blessing.'

SECTION III.

Satisfied with the results of his communications with the patrons of the Irish boroughs, Lord Northington at first looked at the proceedings at Dungannon with no serious alarm;[1] but he, too, like Temple, considered that concession of some kind must still be the rule. Annual Parliaments were desired, and, he thought, ought to be allowed. An absentee tax would be again proposed. This he hoped to defeat, but it was important to secure the confidence of Parliament by acquiescence in reasonable demands. The Irish sugar refiners persisted in asking for protection, and to Northington the choice seemed only to lie between moderate duties which would give them a fair profit, and duties so high as to exclude English competition. The silk and woollen manufacturers also asked for protection, and had powerful friends. The Viceroy hoped to be allowed to tell Parliament either that the Irish duties on English silks and woollens would be increased, or that the English duties on Irish silks and woollens would be lowered.[2]

Sept. 1783

---

[1] 'A Parliamentary reform is the grand subject intended to be proposed by the delegation of the Volunteer corps. There can be little room for apprehension with regard to the fate of this question when the present constitution of the House of Commons in this country is referred to.'—'The Earl of Northington to Lord North, September 23, 1783.' S. P. O.

[2] Ibid.

These questions had been foreseen in England, and ought to have been provided for when the constitution of '82 was conceded. Ireland meant to retaliate for the restrictive duties, and the covenant of peace was to bear immediate fruits in fresh quarrels. Nor was an armed convention so light a thing as it appeared to Lord Northington. Mr. Fox, when he agreed reluctantly to let Grattan have his way, had determined to yield no further, even if the alternative was the abandonment of the island. Nov. 1783

In the prolonged existence of an armed force interfering with the Legislature, and owing no obedience to the executive government, he saw an anomaly pregnant with danger.

'The situation,' he said, in an elaborate and admirable letter to the Viceroy, 'is most critical. Unless the Volunteers dissolve in a reasonable time, Government, and even the name of it, must be at an end, and on the event of the present session of your Parliament the question will entirely depend. If you show firmness, and that firmness is seconded by the aristocracy and Parliament, their dissolution is a certain and not distant event; otherwise I reckon their government, or rather anarchy, as firmly established as such a thing is capable of being, but your government is certainly annihilated. I mean by firmness the determination not to be swayed in the slightest degree by the Volunteers, nor to attend to any petition that may come from them. The concessions made in the Duke of Portland's time were declared sufficient. The account must be

considered as closed, and must never again be opened on any pretence whatever. The firmness of the aristocracy will depend on the degree of it shown in the Castle. Peace is the natural period of Volunteers. If they are encouraged to enlist after this time, all is gone, and our connection with Ireland is worse than none at all. The Volunteers never were, depend upon it, so considerable as they were represented. If they are resisted, I am satisfied they will be defeated. If they are suffered to carry their points by timidity or acquiescence, it is as much over with English government in Ireland as if they had carried them by force. Ireland has more to fear from us than we from her. Her linen trade, which is her staple, depends entirely on the protection of this country. We cannot go on acquiescing in something new for the sake of pleasing Ireland. But, situated as you are among Irishmen—who, next to a job for themselves, love nothing so well as a job for their country—and hardly ever seeing anyone who talks to you soundly on our side of the question, it is next to impossible but that you must fall insensibly into Irish ideas.' [1]

The regular force in Ireland had been quietly restored to its normal complement. As there might be occasion for its services, Fox wrote at the same time to General Burgoyne, who was in command.

'If,' he said, 'either the Parliamentary reform in any shape, however modified, or any other point claimed

[1] 'Mr. Fox to Lord Northington, November 1.'—Abridged. *Life of Grattan*, vol. iii. p. 106.

by the Volunteers be conceded, Ireland is irretrievably lost for ever. The question is whether the constitution which the Irish patriots are so proud of having established shall exist, or whether the Government shall be as purely military as it was under the Prætorian bands. If the Volunteers are baffled they must, in the nature of things, dissolve, or bring it to an immediate crisis, on the event of which, supposing Parliament to be silent, I do not believe you can entertain a serious apprehension. If they petition in the most humble strain it should make no difference. There can be but one measure either for dignity or safety, and that October, measure, from Sergeant Adair's reports, I am 1783 now led to hope could be taken. I mean a declaration against taking into consideration the request of persons met in arms in Dublin for the avowed purpose of obtaining their ends by force. It is a crisis, you may depend upon it. I believe that a proper spirit exerted now is the only possible chance of saving us from total separation or civil war, between which two evils I have not the firmness to choose.'[1]

In 1780 free trade was to have bound the two countries together for ever. In 1782 it was to be the repeal of the 6th of George I. and the new constitution. Now, when the ink was scarcely dry upon the parchment on which the Acts of Liberation had been enrolled, England and Ireland were further apart than before. The Irish Parliament had met before Fox's letter was

[1] 'Mr. Fox to General Burgoyne, November 7.'—Abridged. *Life of Grattan*, vol. iii.

Oct. 14 written. The Viceroy had opened the session with a speech which said nothing. The address was carried without opposition, and also a vote of thanks to the Volunteers, whose convention was still three weeks distant. The stillness was not of very long duration. The question had to be tried in the new House of Commons which of the two competing champions for popular favour was the recognized leader of Irish patriotism. On the 28th Sir Henry Cavendish moved a resolution for a reduction of expenditure. Flood, whose mysterious mission to England had led to nothing, sprung to the front, and violently advocated a diminution of the military establishment. The meaning was obvious. A collision was possible between the Volunteers and the regular army. There were now 12,000 British troops in the island, and the Government might rely upon them to resist the dictation intended to be exercised.

Fox and Portland depended on Grattan to support them in their present difficulty. They had stood by him in his early struggles with Lord North. They had received distinct assurances from him that the concessions of '82 should not be followed by fresh demands, and had made themselves responsible to the British Parliament that Ireland would be satisfied. They expected him to assist them in resisting an alarming proposal pressed unconstitutionally by a body of men who had discovered their power, and were prepared to abuse it. Grattan knew their feelings, and recognized his obligations. He had himself once encouraged the Volunteers to interfere

with Parliament. It was on him that the duty rested of now bringing their presumption within bounds. He was himself an ardent reformer; but, enthusiastic as he was, he did not conceal from himself that in a country like Ireland a redistribution of political power, precipitated by the bayonets of the Volunteers, would lead to the wildest confusion. In spite of his good nature, he had resented the attempt of Flood to steal from him the laurels of the last campaign. He distrusted his rival's honesty. He did not respect his intellect.

Flood, whose manner was affected, had commenced his speech on the reduction of the army with an apology for an illness which did not appear to be serious. Grattan rose after him to oppose this motion. He would not occupy the time of the House, he said, with speaking of his personal infirmities. He reminded Flood that when he accepted office under Lord Harcourt, he had supported him in unbounded extravagance. At a time when England had acted justly and even generously towards Ireland, when she was still feeling the wounds of the late war, and comforting herself with the belief that she had secured Ireland's friendship, he thought it inopportune, unbecoming, ungracious, to press upon her retrenchments in the army. November

Grattan's conduct was signally creditable to him, for it was certain to be unpopular. Flood saw his advantage. Now was the time to make himself first in the affection of the Volunteers.

'It requires but little candour,' he said, 'to make a nocturnal attack on my infirmity. I am not afraid of

the right honourable gentleman. I will meet him anywhere on any ground, by night or day. I would stand poorly in my own estimation and in my country's opinion if I did not stand far above him. I do not come dressed in a rich wardrobe of words to delude the people. I am not one who, after saying Parliament was a Parliament of prostitutes, made their voices subservient to my interest. I am not the mendicant patriot who was bought by my country for a sum of money, and then sold my country for prompt payment. I was never bought by the people, nor ever sold them. Give me leave to say if the gentleman enters often into this kind of colloquy he will not have much to boast of at the end of the session.

The Speaker did not interfere. The cries of 'Order!' if such cries were raised, were drowned in the applause of the little band who had resented the elevation of Grattan above their own idol. Flood, who had sued for the Castle livery, even under Lord Townshend; Flood, who had whined to Lord Harcourt that he had parted with his popularity to please him; Flood, whose vanity was dissatisfied with the best office in the Crown's gift, and now at last had only stepped to the front of the patriots when he found Portland would not be duped into restoring him to his seat in the Privy Council; Flood, of all public men in Ireland, could least afford to challenge a retrospect into his political history. Grattan, though his sins were many, had not deserved to be taunted with the name of mendicant patriot. If Grattan, in his reply, laid on the lash too heavily, never was chastisement

more wantonly provoked. He rose among the cheers of his friends in the House, and cheers and gibes mingled from the galleries.

'I will suppose,' he said—affecting at the outset to put a hypothetical case, but speedily dropping the effort and speaking directly at his antagonist—'I will suppose a public character, a man not now in this House, but who formerly might have been. I will suppose it was his constant practice to abuse any man who differed from him, and to betray every man who trusted him. I will begin from his cradle, and divide his life into three stages. In the first he was intemperate, in the second corrupt, in the third seditious. Suppose him a great egotist, his honour equal to his oath, and I will stop him and say (here looking full at Flood) Sir, your talents are not so great as your life has been infamous. You were silent for years, and you were silent for money. When affairs of consequence to the nation were debating, you might be seen passing by these doors like a guilty spirit waiting for the moment of putting the question that you might hop in, and give your venal vote; or at times, with a vulgar brogue, aping the manners and affecting the infirmities of Lord Chatham, or like a kettledrummer lathering yourself into popularity to catch the vulgar. Or you might be seen hovering over the dome like an ill-omened bird of night, with sepulchral note, a cadaverous aspect, and broken beak, ready to stoop and pounce upon your prey. You can be trusted by no man. The people cannot trust you. The Ministers cannot trust you. You deal out the most

impartial treachery to both. You tell the nation it is ruined by other men, while it is sold by you. You fled from the embargo; you fled from the sugar bill. I therefore tell you, in the face of the country, before all the world, and to your beard, you are not an honest man.'

Those who have witnessed an Irish row in its wildest form may imagine the scene which followed. Floor and galleries were full, and every Irishman was on fire. Flood sate for a moment, as if stunned. He rose at last, stared about him, and stammered a few words which were lost in the tempest of noise. The Speaker, finally compelling some kind of silence, said that he had listened to the contest between two such distinguished men with inexpressible pain, and entreated Flood to sit down. Flood obeyed, and presently walked out. Grattan followed. Each consulted their friends, and a duel was arranged for the next morning. The Sergeant-at-Arms took them both into custody, and they were bound over to keep the peace. The storm, as brief as it was furious, died away; but a Parliament in which two leading members could rate each other like fishwomen was unlikely to command authority in Ireland, or confidence in the sister country.

SECTION IV.

THE Cabinet had insisted that the Volunteer convention should be encountered with firmness. They had even recommended that it should be prevented from meeting by force, if nothing else would serve. Lord Northington was a coward, and he had cowards all about him. The Volunteers had been twice thanked by the House of Commons as saviours of their country; they had been courted by Temple and flattered by Colonel Fitzpatrick. Not one member of the Privy Council could be found 'to advocate the idea of Government interfering to forbid the meeting.'[1] November, 1783

On the 10th of November Dublin was to witness the presence of two rival representative assemblies, sitting one on each side of the river, and dividing between them the allegiance of Ireland. Every province had responded to the invitation to send deputies. Three hundred members had been chosen to match the number of the House of Commons, the moving spirit among them being the Bishop of Derry, otherwise known as Earl of Bristol, who had received the thanks of the Volunteers at Dungannon.

Frederick Augustus Hervey was the most singular representative of the class of bishops who had been chosen to preside over the spiritual destinies of the

[1] 'The Earl of Northington to Mr. Fox, November 17, 1783.'

Irish people. He had been appointed during the short viceroyalty of his brother, and as long as the late earl lived he had been known only as an eccentric person of unepiscopal habits, who had built a vast palace in a wild corner of his diocese. The earl dying childless, the bishop succeeded to the title and a large fortune, and rather from love of excitement and vanity than from personal interest in Ireland, he assumed the character of a warlike prelate of the Middle Ages.

He was connected with the wildest blood in the country. George Robert Fitzgerald, of Turlow, near Castlebar, notorious, even in those reckless days, for his defiance of all laws, human and divine, was his sister's son, and commanded a regiment of Volunteers whom the bishop had raised, with a second regiment whom he had collected himself out of his vagabond dependents at Turlow. George Robert had ruled as absolutely among the bogs and mountains of Mayo as the MacWilliams of the days of Elizabeth and James. Like many of his countrymen who essentially resembled him, he showed little in his exterior of the real man. He was refined in manner, and soft and smooth of speech. He had travelled, and had rivalled Beauchamp Bagenal in the variety of his exploits and adventures; and he was so often in scrapes, from which only sword or pistol could extricate him, that he wore a chain-shirt under his clothes.[1] He had inherited his temper in his blood.

[1] Dick Martin was counsel for the prosecution when George Robert was tried for ill-treating his father. Dick said the wretched father had indeed committed many crimes, the worst of them being that he had

His father had been a lawless ruffian. George Robert, thinking his father lived too long, shut him up for three years in a cave with a muzzled bear, and in this condition the old man was lying at the time of the Dublin convention.[1]

These two—the bishop and his nephew—were the principal figures in the scene. When the day came the whole city was out; the footways lined with armed Volunteers, the windows crowded with spectators. The Royal Exchange had been first thought of as the place of assembly. The Rotunda, at the top of Sackville Street, was substituted for the Exchange, as more central and convenient. Thither were streaming the deputies in uniform, the streets all ablaze with scarlet and green and gold and azure. Grenadier corps marched first, with Irish battle-axes and muskets slung across their shoulders. Behind the grenadiers came the delegates, two and two, in uniform, with side-arms, each wearing a green scarf. Then the barrister corps, brilliantly

---

begotten the prisoner. George Robert glanced at him. 'Martin!' he said, 'you look very healthy. You take good care of your constitution; but, I tell you, you have this day taken very bad care of your life.' A duel followed. Fitzgerald's first shot missed. Martin, to make sure of his man, walked up, and touched his breast with his pistol before he fired. Fitzgerald staggered, from the force of the blow; but, to Martin's astonishment, turned round, drew his second pistol, fired at, and hit him. The chain-shirt had stopped the ball.

[1] George Robert was hanged a few years after at Castlebar. He had been sentenced to three years' imprisonment for some crime. The Marquis of Buckinghamshire pardoned him, after a few months' detention. He went down to Turlow, and immediately afterwards murdered one of his own people. For this offence he was tried, convicted, and finally hanged.

decked out with buttons, carrying for a motto, 'Vox populi suprema lex.' In the rear came Napper Tandy, with the Dublin artillery, the guns dressed out in ribands, each with a scroll about his muzzle, saying in conspicuous letters, 'Open thou our mouths, oh Lord, and our lips shall show forth thy praise.' The bishop himself entered Dublin with the state and manner of a monarch, as if he expected to be chosen King of Ireland. He sate in an open landau, drawn by six horses, magnificently apparelled in purple, with white gloves, gold-fringed, and gold tassels dangling from them, and buckles of diamonds on knee and shoe. His own mounted servants, in gorgeous liveries, attended on either side of his carriage. George Robert rode in front, with a squadron of dragoons in gold and scarlet uniforms, on the finest horses which could be bought in the land. A second squadron brought up the rear in equal splendour, and thus, with slow and regal pace, the procession passed on, Volunteers falling in, with bands playing and colours flying, the crowd shouting 'Long life to the bishop!' the bishop bowing to the crowd.

Passing through College Green, the right reverend earl paused at the door of the Parliament House. The dragoons halted. The trumpets were blown. The Lords and Commons, who had just finished prayers, came out to pay their respects, and gaze on the extraordinary scene. The bishop saluted; the bishop's guard presented arms; the band struck up the Volunteers' march, and having thus, as he supposed, produced a proper impression, the august being waved his hand.

The horses again moved; the cavalcade swept on, amidst screams and shouts, past King William's statue, over the river, and up the broad line of Sackville Street. As the carriage approached the Rotunda, the artillery opened, and between the guns pealed wild hurrahs; the delegates were entering the hall. The bishop passed in after them, to show himself, scattered condescending smiles and patronizing words of encouragement, and then retiring, to give them an opportunity of electing him, as he expected, to the chair, drove to his house, with the same state, to entertain the leading members of the assembly at a magnificent dinner.

Lord Northington meanwhile had not been idle. Though afraid to encounter the Volunteers with open resistance, he had known how to sow divisions among them, and they had come together predisposed to quarrel on elementary principles. All the delegates were for reform, all were members of the Established Church; and among churchmen at least a moiety were determined Protestants. The Bishop of Derry and the extreme party were for Catholic emancipation and separation from England. Lord Charlemont and the country gentlemen who acted with him, though enthusiastic for 1782, and anxious for a more creditable Parliament, were not disposed to place themselves at the mercy of a numerical majority of Papists, or to run the risk of a repeal of the Act of Settlement. Both the Viceroy and Burgoyne had preferred diplomacy to force. They had discovered the line of division, and had judiciously operated on it; and thus when, on the bishop's

departure, the election of chairman came on, the choice was found to have fallen, not on the right reverend English nobleman, but on Lord Charlemont. Successful so far, the Viceroy still feared that if the Catholic millions were roused to demand the suffrage, or if they were ever supposed to be anxious to obtain it, a majority in the Convention might yet press it upon Parliament; and he ventured on a manœuvre highly characteristic of his cunning, feeble nature. 'My plan,' he said, 'was by means of our friends in the assembly, to perplex its proceedings and create confusion.' Sir Boyle Roche, one of the delegates, a light, absurd person, declared in the convention on the second day of the meeting, that he was commissioned by Lord Kenmare to say that the Catholics did not wish to press their claims to the franchise, and disavowed a desire for an immediate alteration in their position. The support of the Catholics was vital to the success of the party of revolution. Sir Boyle's statement was received with confusion and astonishment. The Catholic committee in Dublin protested that he was not speaking for them. 'They did not differ so widely from the rest of mankind as by their own act to prevent the removal of their shackles.' The Bishop of Derry, their chief advocate and champion, was fierce in his denials. A day or two later there came a letter from Lord Kenmare himself, declaring with equal distinctness that he had given no authority for the use of his name.

Sir Boyle being called on to explain, gave a simple account of his performance. He had observed with

concern, he said, the court paid to the Catholics by a knot of factious politicians. They had been led to believe that the resolutions of the Convention were to be law, and that its first act was to be Catholic emancipation. He conceived the time had come when Lord Kenmare and the more respectable members of the Catholic communion should disavow these violent counsels. They were in the country, and could not be consulted; and supposing himself to be acquainted with their views, he had ventured to speak in their behalf.

Though he assumed the responsibility, there can be little doubt that he acted at the instigation of the Viceroy; and Northington may have felt justified by the deferential tone invariably adopted towards the Castle by the Catholic nobility. In any other country such an extraordinary piece of audacity might have had fatal consequences. In Ireland, strange to say, it succeeded. In the interval of uncertainty the Anti-Catholic party in the Convention had time to organize themselves. The exposure came too late. A committee was chosen to draw up the intended Reform Bill. The Bishop of Derry was excluded from it. Flood, who, with all his violence, was still opposed to the Catholic claims, affected illness, appeared, when forced to come forward, swathed in flannels, and talked mysteriously in broken sentences. The cry of the Church in danger was still powerful, even among the hot spirits in the Rotunda; and as the Reform Bill took shape, it became known that the admission of the Catholics to the franchise was not to form part of the scheme.

The danger, however, was not over. Beyond the Convention, there was still the Dublin mob. 'The country was full of disorder, madness, and inconsistency.'[1] The city swarmed with enthusiastic politicians, who unfortunately had muskets and cannon. The storm outside, if it raged with sufficient violence, might yet carry the Convention off its feet, and the Parliament was hesitating and frightened. George Robert Fitzgerald gave Convention banquets. The Bishop of Derry rode abroad daily with his escort of dragoons amidst adoring crowds. He called one day on Lord Charlemont at Marino.[2] 'Things are going well, my Lord,' he said, rubbing his hands. 'We shall have blood, my Lord, we shall have blood!' George Robert tried hard to gain Grattan. Finding Grattan cold, he invited him to dinner, and placed a band of ruffians in ambush to make short work of him. Grattan was saved by dining that evening at the Castle.

At length the crisis came. The Convention committee produced its bill, which Flood, who, like many other patriot members, had a seat both in the Rotunda and the House of Commons, was to introduce to Parliament. The Irish Constitution was on its trial. No matter how limited the present demands of the Convention, the principle was at stake. In which of the two assemblies sitting in Dublin lay the real power of legislating for Ireland? Flood was now at the height of his glory. In him, and no longer in Grattan, were

[1] 'The Earl of Northington to Fox, November 17.'

[2] Lord Charlemont's villa outside Dublin.

centred the hopes of Ireland's patriots. On the 29th of November he rose to discharge his task. The galleries were crowded with the fiercest of the mob. Dangerous-looking groups of ruffians lounged about the doors. Conscious of the danger of scattering fire in the midst of such combustible material, Flood was in manner studiously quiet, and the matter of what he proposed was moderate. The franchise in city or borough was to be confined to Protestant freeholders and leaseholders. The close boroughs, whose representatives were at present returned by the Corporations, were to be abolished; and members were to swear, on taking their seats, that they had used no corrupt means to obtain them. Colonel Brownlow seconded the motion, and then Yelverton, who was now Attorney-General, rose for the Government. November 29

No suspicion could rest on the patriotism of Yelverton, who had carried the modifications of Poynings' Act. He refused to enter into the merits of the Bill. It was sufficient for him that it originated with a body of armed men external to the House.

'We sit not here,' he said, 'to register the edicts of another Assembly, or receive propositions at the point of the bayonet. When the Volunteers form themselves into a debating society, and with that rude instrument, the bayonet, probe and explore the Constitution, my respect for them is destroyed. It is vain, whatever be pretended, to shut our eyes to what every one has seen and heard—armed men walking bareheaded through the streets under a military escort, courting the smiles

of the multitude, meeting in that Pantheon of divinities the Rotunda, forming committees and sub-committees, receiving reports and petitions, and going through the mockery of a Parliament. . . . Is this a time to alter the Constitution? Will the armed associations, wise as they may be, be able to form a better? Before they have for a single Session entered on the enjoyment of it, like children they throw away the bauble for which, with the eagerness of infantine caprice, they have struggled. I say to the Volunteers, you shall not throw from you the blessings which you possess. Cultivate your prosperity. Enjoy the fruits of your virtue. Beat your swords into ploughshares. Return to your occupations. Leave legislation in those hands in which the laws have placed it. . . . Our preservation depends on the vote we shall now give. We are on a precipice. To recede a step more plunges us into ruin.'

The debate which followed was said to be the hottest ever heard within the walls of the Irish House of Commons. Hely Hutchinson, Scott, Conolly, William Ponsonby, Bowes Daly, and Sir John Parnell spoke for the Government. Grattan, notwithstanding George Robert's designs on him, and though he was supporting Flood, remained true to his general principles. He approved of Reform, and he said so. Curran, who had just entered Parliament, and sate with Flood for the borough of Kilbeggan,[1] made his maiden speech on the same side. He said little; but that little was clear, and to

[1] Nearly all the patriots in the Irish Parliament sate for close boroughs—so opposite was fact to theory.

the purpose. Flood declared that 'the honour of the peerage might be obtained by any ruffian who possessed borough interest.' Bowes Daly told the Volunteers in rejoinder that they were rushing on destruction; 'there was a turbulent demagogue among them who was urging them to their disgrace.' As the storm raved louder, passion grew more careless in its language, and at last Flood exclaimed, that 'if the conduct of the House that night should create dissatisfaction in the Volunteers, that body and the Parliament might be committed against each other, and the public peace be disturbed.'

Here at last was a threat, and now Fitzgibbon rose to show for the first time of what stuff he was made. Once already he had startled the propriety of the House by moving, when they were flattering the Volunteers, for the production of a censure which had been passed upon that body but a few months before. He had withdrawn his motion, and they had forgotten him. They were not likely to forget him any more.

He was a small, delicately-made man, with a handsome oval face, a bold grey eye, a manner so haughty that patriot members complained of his intolerable insolence. His father's death left him in possession of the estate in Limerick, with seven thousand a year, independent of his practice at the bar. He was the most just, as well as the most determined, of landlords; and he was loved and trusted by his tenants as profoundly as he was afterwards hated by demagogues and agitators. His speech in this memorable debate was a

declaration of purpose, an intimation clearly expressed to friend and foe of the part which he meant to play in the politics of Ireland. His father had trained him in an honourable contempt for the devices by which the Castle authority had been sustained.[1] He had supported the popular cause against England when he considered Ireland was asking her due, careless what Viceroys thought of him. He had fought on the other side against extravagant demands, indifferent to the clamours of the patriots. He had sought for no preferment. Preferment was now seeking him. He was already named for Attorney-General on the approaching promotion of Yelverton to the place of Chief Baron, but he maintained his personal independence, and neither spoke nor voted but according to his own conviction. He rose at the close of the debate, and began by sketching the origin of the Reform movement, tracing it to a democratic society in England, and thence to corresponding associations at Belfast. He alluded to the first resolutions at Dungannon, and pointed to the Rotunda convention as the result of having submitted to the Volunteers' dictation. Then, coming to the point, he said—

'I do not oppose the introduction of this Bill because it is replete with absurdities. I oppose it because it comes to us under the mandate of a military congress. Gentlemen say it is dangerous to commit the Parliament and the Volunteers. I know it is dangerous.

[1] Old Fitzgibbon once said of the Pension List, 'I have read that the wages of sin is death. Now-a-days the wages of sin is Ireland.'

I know the man that does it should answer for the crime with his head. But I know the force of the law is sufficient to crush them to atoms; and for one, I say, I do not think life worth having at the will of an armed demagogue. If ever there was an occasion that called on every man possessing one sentiment of liberty to exert it in defence of the Constitution, it is this, it is the present, which calls on us to spurn this Bill away. There is a circumstance of idle babble gone forth which only could have issued from the cells of Bedlam—that if this Bill is rejected some wretched fool will refuse to pay taxes. I have also heard that a House of Parliament is to be built at Dungannon, and that we are to have annual sessions of conventions to regulate the business of the nation. Gentlemen may call this liberty if they please. I call it the worst kind of tyranny. To put at end to it at once, I am for rejecting the motion for leave to introduce a Bill.'

Yelverton had spoken with dignity. Fitzgibbon spoke in a tone peculiar, and perhaps unexampled, in the country to which he belonged. There had grown out of the Irish race by some freak of nature a man who had no personal object of his own which he wished to serve, who detested anarchy, who despised as well as detested the cant which passed under the name of patriotism, who combined with high intellectual power the most dauntless personal courage.

Well Fitzgibbon knew that Irish sedition would never forgive his words. Amidst yells and sarcasms from House and gallery the division was taken, and

leave to introduce the Bill was refused by a majority of two to one.[1]

Following up his success, as a further lesson to the Prætorians at the Rotunda, Yelverton then moved 'that it is now necessary to declare that this House will maintain its rights and privileges against all encroachments.' This, too, was carried by an equally large majority, and at once the danger was over. As invariably happens in Ireland, the spectre of rebellion has but to be boldly confronted to fade and disappear. General Burgoyne had taken precautions to preserve the peace of the city. The Volunteers did not care to measure strength with him.

The Convention had remained in session till the result of the first division was known. It was a Saturday night. Lord Charlemont, who was in the chair, moved that they should adjourn till Monday. On Monday morning the delegates re-assembled, and a Captain Moore rose to complain of the insults which had been passed upon them by Fitzgibbon. Lord Charlemont at once flattered the assembly and stopped the discussion by telling Moore he was out of order in alluding to what had passed in another place. At the Bishop of Derry's request, Flood then described the reception and the fate of their Bill in the House of Commons. Earnestly deprecating violence, he proposed that there should be an address from the Irish nation to the King, which he offered himself to present; and then mildly and innocently the great Convention, ushered

[1] 157 to 77.

into existence amidst the thunders of cannon to command the destinies of Ireland, adjourned *sine die* and closed its vainglorious career.

The Bishop of Derry only was unable to sit down under his defeat. Delivered from irresolute companions, and now unchallenged chief of the Volunteers, 'the Bishop,' it was said, 'rose like a phœnix out of the ashes of the Convention.' This absurd person still clung to the dream of a separate Ireland of which he was to be King, and his admirers in the North fooled him to the top of his bent. On his return to Ulster 'the Bill of Rights Battalion' presented him with an address under arms. They said they had seen with indignation the treatment of their delegates. 'They hoped still, under the auspices of his lordship, to cleanse the Augean stable, those noisome stalls of venality and corruption in Parliament.' The Bishop replied that 'the spirit of freedom, like a Promethean fire, was now animating the lifeless mass of Irishmen.' He appealed to the Catholics. He appealed to the Americanized Presbyterians. 'These respectable citizens,' he said, 'were far more numerous than their oppressors.' 'They had crouched hitherto under the iron rod from a dread of wounding their country through the side of their tyrants.' 'Gentlemen of the Bill of Rights Battalion,' he concluded, 'I summon you to consistency. Tyranny is not Government, and allegiance is due only to protection.'

The Battalion swore they would support their Constitution, or be buried under its ruins. Last, strangest,

and most grotesque feature in the history of the Irish Volunteers! The emancipators of their country chose for their favourite leader a British Earl and a Bishop of the Irish Established Church.

SECTION V.

The shadowy giant of the Convention having faded into vapour, the Parliament, relieved of its presence, proceeded with its ordinary work. In December Mr. Molyneux moved once more the threatened Absentee Tax of four shillings in the pound on all rents remitted out of the kingdom to non-resident landowners. A free Irish Legislature, alive to the real causes of Ireland's misfortunes, would have welcomed a measure which had been almost carried in the days of its bondage. In the pursuit of imaginary triumphs her politicians had lost the power of recognizing their real foe. Northington had doubtless been at work under the surface. There was a cry that such a tax would lower the value of lands—that it would divide the countries now so happily united. Sir John Blaquiere reminded the House of the circumstances under which an Absentee Tax had been proposed when he was himself Secretary. 'Every voice had been at first in its favour. He went himself to England to solicit it as a boon from Lord North's Cabinet. He urged his suit indecently, he said, and with unbecoming importunity, and had wrung from his chiefs a reluctant consent. He returned full of joy to propose it as a Government measure, and the gentlemen who had been so eager turned their backs on him. He had divided in a minority of 14.'

December, 1783

It appeared that the Constitution of '82 had reconciled the patriots to this their deepest grievance. The minority of 14 became now a minority of 192. The Absentee Tax was rejected by 184 votes to 22.

The autumn session wound up with the passing of the Supply Bills. The Coalition Ministry in England was dissolved, and Pitt came to the helm to compose the crisis which had been provoked by the American disaster. Northington, who had made himself popular in Ireland, was invited to remain, but declined, and the young Duke of Rutland, then only 29 years old, who died too soon to display qualities in a larger sphere which might have given him a place in the history of the empire, came over to serve his political apprenticeship as Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland. The excitement of '82 was over. The Convention had alarmed the timidity and disgusted the intelligence of the higher classes, and with the Duke, 'the enemies of Irish liberty,' as they are termed in patriotic histories, came back into power. Yelverton was made Chief Baron and Lord Avonmore. Scott became Chief Justice and Earl of Clonmel. Fitzgibbon as Attorney-General was the ruling spirit in the practical Administration. The revenue was still short of the expenditure. Three hundred thousand pounds had been borrowed to meet the now constant deficit. A bad harvest and the Volunteer insanity had injured trade, and the artisans of Dublin were out of work, starving and mutinous. The exasperation against British soldiers had been aggravated by the failure of the Convention. General Luttrell had to inform the

House of Commons that 'there was now practised in Ireland, in the 18th century, a cruelty that would have astonished the barbarians of the 14th—the practice of houghing men for no reason but that they were soldiers, by ruffians whose qualities were a strong arm, a sharp knife, and a hard heart.' The soldiers had the passions of men. It was not yet understood that Ireland was to be ruled by conciliation, and that their business was to submit. In some instances they had done justice to themselves. So many men of the 49th had been hamstrung that the regiment had been ordered out of Dublin, for fear they might inflict some frightful retribution on the mob who were in league to protect their assailants.

The Viceroy loitered in London after his appointment. The Christmas recess was prolonged, February, and members anxious to be busy complained of 1784
'the suspension of Irish business on account of a squabble of gentlemen in England for places.' He came at last at the end of February. Complimentary addresses were presented by both Houses, not indeed without signs of opposition. The Duke of Leinster had told Lord Mornington that he would give no support to Mr. Pitt's Administration, but the opposition was merely the revival of the traditional system. The Viceroy hoped to have conciliated sufficient support by announcing that English politics were not to affect the conduct of Irish Government. But this was not what had been meant at all. He had to report 'that Government influence would be reduced to nothing *unless security could be given by very high terms indeed that particular*

persons should be benefited without being liable to disappointment in case of new changes of Administration.' [1] Mr. Orde,[2] who came as Secretary, wrote that 'he was almost distracted with the infinite numbers and variety of applicants for favour, who had all long stories to tell. The patronage of Ireland would not suffice for one day's short allowance, if all who crowded into the ship were to be fed.' [3] The hungry applicants were rationed so far as the Government resources extended. Those who were left out were soothed by promises. The crew at last fell into their places, and the vessel was once more under way. The Duke was able to mention as 'one great cause of confidence the effect of what was passing out of doors upon the minds of almost every person of property and understanding who considered the stake they had to venture, and who could not look to any so sure protection as that of his majesty's Government.' [4]

March, 1784

The first business which came before Parliament was the 'houghing.' Luttrell, himself a soldier, told the story. The perpetrators of these atrocious acts were protected by the public opinion of their class, and had not been brought to justice. He introduced and carried a bill, to oblige the barony where such a crime had been committed, to provide a pension of 20*l.* a year for the maintenance of the disabled soldier, so long as

[1] 'The Duke of Rutland to Lord Sydney, February 27. Secret.' S. P. O.

[2] Created afterwards Lord Bolton.

[3] 'Mr. Orde to ——, March 3, 1784.' S. P. O.

[4] 'The Duke of Rutland to Lord Sydney, February 27, 1784.' S.P.O.

the criminal remained undetected. A second clause provided that, in case of conviction, these wretches should be executed within two days of their sentence, and should be fed in the interval with bread and water.[1]

The phenomenon was repeating itself which has appeared with invariable sequence in Irish history. The hatred against England was increasing with each concession to popular demands, and fresh severity was required to prevent the mischievous consequences of those healing measures, which had been represented as the certain grounds of future peace and good will.

The Reform question, though its back was broken, was not dead. The Bishop of Derry was still haranguing the Ulster mobs. Flood had carried over and presented the address to the King. He had received no answer, and was about to try his bill a second time in Parliament. It had been rejected in November, on the ground that it was forced on the House by intimidation. The Convention being dissolved, it could be now received and debated on its merits. Flood himself was frightened at the spirit which was abroad, and was only anxious to be decently quit of his responsibilities. Leave was given this time for the introduction of the bill, the Duke calculating on being able to defeat it by a heavier majority on a second reading than he could have commanded for a refusal of admission. Thus he hoped that by moderation 'a question so unpleasant and distressing in the present circumstances of the

[1] 23, 24 George III. cap. 56.

kingdom would be more effectually quashed; and without unnecessary irritation to the feelings and prejudices of certain persons who stood forward in support of the measure.'[1]

The debate, when the second reading came on, was long and tedious. The fire had been expended in November. There was now only the smouldering of damp and ashes. Sir Boyle Roche said that the extension of the suffrage to Protestant leaseholders would lead to the expulsion of the Catholic tenantry to make room for them. Grattan spoke again for the principle of reform, and defended the Volunteers. The discussion dragged on till four in the morning, but with the languor attaching to a cause which was consciously lost. The division, when it came,[2] was decisive of the prospects of the question, so long as the present Parliament continued, or was protected from intimidation.

Far away, notwithstanding, was the halcyon period which Rutland anticipated. Submission to the Dungannon resolutions in '82 had been a fatal encouragement to perseverance in sedition

Maddened at the defeat of the bill, which they had been taught to regard as the door that opened into Paradise, the Dublin populace howled and stormed The Bishop of Derry set himself to raise new corps of Volunteers in the North. The Viceroy, at Fitzgibbon's advice, sent down officers in disguise to watch him, with a warrant in their pockets should an arrest

[1] 'Duke of Rutland to Lord Sydney, March 17. Secret.'

[2] 159 to 85.

be necessary.[1] But there was a more immediate and more serious danger. The Reform Bill gone, the patriots struck upon a course more certain to set Dublin in a flame, and introduced resolutions for the protection of Irish manufactures. Free trade they now called a mockery. The people were still starving in the streets; the country was as poor as before. Perfidious England, when it gave free trade to Ireland, knew well that it was giving her a useless bauble. 'It was like opening the veins of a wretch expiring with hunger. There was not on the face of the earth a race of men so abject as the Irish; not the Esquimaux in North America, not the Hottentots at the Cape of Good Hope; and the cause was the injustice of the laws. Irish manufactures required protection, and must have it.'

Such were the arguments—echoes of the cries out of doors—addressed to the Parliament. The Parliament for the present was not convinced, and the resolutions were heavily defeated. The vote filled the measure of popular indignation. Handbills were sent out to rally the friends of Irish liberty. The Mayor of Dublin was called on to take measures to preserve peace. The Mayor of Dublin, true to the traditions of his office, refused. The mob gathered at the doors of the Parliament House. They thronged the passages. They

April, 1784

[1] This singular prelate ran a near chance of ending his career on the gallows. 'I shall be much concerned,' the Duke wrote, 'to find myself obliged to proceed to extremities, and take a step which may occasion any ferment; but I think it essential that an example should be made among the abettors of sedition, if such there be.'—'To Lord Sydney, March 17. Secret.'

filled the bar and gallery, and from the gallery they marked unpopular members, and threatened them with death. The patriot newspapers preached assassination. The leading articles 'were essays in praise of murder, investigating the different means by which it might be perpetrated, preferring the poignard as the most certain and least dangerous to the assassin.' [1] Fitzgibbon said he had a man arrested who had conspired with others 'to kill seven members of the House of Commons, he himself having the honour to be one.' The murderers were to receive a hundred pounds apiece; and it had been agreed that if either of the seven who had been named escaped, 'any other of the majority who had voted against the protecting duties might be taken instead.' [2] Even Grattan admitted that the Press teemed daily with such atrocious matter as would not be suffered in any other country.

Again the Mayor was called on to arrest the publishers and printers of these papers. He complained so languidly, and handled the offenders so gently, that the Serjeant-at-Arms was sent with a guard of soldiers to take them out of his hands. The soldiers went to work more roughly than the city officials, and the air rung with shrieks of indignant patriots over the wrongs of their suffering comrades.

In the midst of these scenes the unfortunate Constitution was overtaken by a calamity. The reader will

---

[1] Speech of General Luttrell, April 12, 1784.—*Irish Debates.*

[2] *Irish Debates.* Ibid.

remember the battle over the Writs of Error and the Irish appeals, and the earnestness with which Ireland had insisted on her right to give final judgment in her own causes. The value of the privilege was to be illustrated in the very first appeal which was brought before the Irish House of Lords. A large property was at stake. The suit lay between a member of the Loftus family and a Mr. Rochford. Judgment had been given in the Court of King's Bench for Mr. Loftus; but the Judges were divided, and the case came on for hearing before the Peers. Opinion was so nicely balanced that votes were of consequence. Lord Strangford, a clergyman and Dean of Derry, who for forty years had been a pensioner on the Irish Establishment, conceived that a court of justice was like the Legislature, and that a vote in one as well as the other was convertible into money. He applied to Mr. Rochford in general terms for assistance in his distressed circumstances. Mr. Rochford excusing himself, Lord Strangford wrote again to him, saying that he was anxious to make himself acquainted with the merits of the pending cause, but was unable through poverty to attend at the House. Alluding to his first request for help, he said 'that probably since that time Mr. Rochford's rents had been more punctually paid;' and 'he was encouraged by that consideration to renew a request which might be productive of too many advantages to enumerate.' 'Two hundred pounds would fix him in a most enviable situation. One hundred pounds would enable him, by daily appearance, to express his gratitude where he

flattered himself to see success crown the undertaking.'[1]

Rochford forwarded this remarkable production to the Chancellor. It was produced and read in the House of Lords, and their Lordships may have doubted whether they were wholly worthy of the boon which Grattan had procured for them. 'A general alarm was felt for the safety of property.'[2] Strangford was ordered to attend at the bar of the House, where the Viceroy hoped 'he would be proceeded against with the rigour which so notorious an act of corruption and dishonour deserved.' Not appearing, he was taken into custody by the Black Rod. He admitted his letter, though protesting that he had meant no harm. The Lords thought otherwise, and an Act was passed disabling the miserable old man from voting or sitting as a Peer of Parliament thenceforward.

It was a bad case, and Strangford had sinned in being found out. Yet he was but tainted a shade more deeply than his judges, and in the same series of letters which tell the story of his delinquency the Duke said that throughout the session the Government had been encountered by a petty embarrassing opposition in the House of Lords; that the meaning of it 'was to enhance their importance and make the Peers' pretensions the first object in the distribution of emoluments and honours.' 'The Peers,' he wrote in a 'most secret'

---

[1] 'Lord Strangford to Mr. Rochford, January 10, 1784.' S. P. O.

[2] 'The Duke of Rutland to Lord Sydney, April 12, 1784.' S. P. O.

despatch of the 19th of April, 'under the new Constitution have more power than before. Greater attention, therefore, and more expensive influence will be required if we mean to direct its progress in the right way.' 'A share in the lucrative favours of Government must be set aside for the purpose of gaining attachments in that House, as the invention of mere external allurements will no longer maintain the influence which they may for the moment acquire.'

'I must observe also,' the Duke continued in the same letter, 'upon the scantiness of the provision which is at the disposal of Government for the support of an increased and increasing number of claimants. I must therefore represent the necessity of taking some measure as early as possible for the enlargement of our means. It will be absolutely incumbent on me to endeavour to establish in the House of Lords the strongest and most immediate connection with a certain number of powerful members who may be at all times looked to, and may be depended upon for the fidelity and firmness with which they will execute their trust.'[1]

Entering into further details, he said that the Duke of Leinster, though still in opposition to Pitt, was willing to come to terms. Lord Mornington[2] 'was disposed to take a leading part in favour of administration.' Lord Hillsborough promised well. Lord Shannon made 'fair professions,' which were not clogged so far 'with

[1] 'To Lord Sydney, April 19, 1784.' S. P. O.
[2] Afterwards Marquis Wellesley.

unreasonable demands in favour of his friends and extensive Parliamentary connections.' Lord Clifden was willing to support Government, 'but not without a steady view to his object—an official establishment for his second son.' His brother, the Archbishop of Cashel, acted on the same principles, and 'did not lose sight of the Primacy or the See of Dublin.' To meet so many pretensions, the Duke wished to create some new offices which might be objects of ambition to the great Peers —a Presidency of the Council; a Privy Seal, with rank; a Speakership of the House of Lords, distinct from the office of Chancellor — if salaries could be found for them without adding new burdens to the Establishment.

Passing from Peers to Commoners, the Duke said that 'the Provost, who had always some object in view, and whose objects were not generally marked with the character of moderation and humility,' desired that Mr. Rigby should be induced to retire, and that he might have the Mastership of the Rolls. John Ponsonby would give his services, 'provided his terms were acceded to.' 'He demanded the office of Secretary of State for life for his son,' 'a thing not to be acquiesced in;' but as his influence was great, the Duke was disposed to let his son have the Post-Office, to give a Peerage to his son-in-law, Mr. O'Callaghan,[1] and 'to make some inferior arrangements to gratify his numerous dependents.' Mr. Loftus, too, might be counted on. 'His views ex-

[1] Created Lord Lismore.

tended to a Peerage,' and he had received a promise of it on condition of his surrendering his pension. This pension, having lost his cause with Mr. Rochford, 'he was unwilling to relinquish,' and it would be necessary to allow him to keep it.[1]

[1] 'The Duke of Rutland to Lord Sydney, March 26. Most secret.' S. P. O.

SECTION VI.

1784 To lift the curtain which hides the working of the Irish Government is to see the condemnation of it written as by a handwriting on the wall. Well might Irishmen demand Reform. Never did system saturated with corruption need it more. But it did not occur to them that if Reform was to be effectual, each one of them must begin with a reform of his own heart. The Parliament was corrupt because Lords and Commons were only influenced by base motives. If England had refused to bribe them, the same men would have followed their interest in other ways, to their own and their country's still more fatal injury. So long as they remained unworthy of freedom, the only reform which would have benefited them would have been the suspension of their powers of self-government. And yet the blame did not rest wholly with the Irish. The least heeded yet not the least mischievous effect of misgovernment is the character which it generates alike in the rulers and the ruled. Centuries of injustice and neglect had divided the Irish nation into a proletariat, to whom law was synonymous with tyranny, and into an aristocracy and gentry who, deprived of the natural inducements to honourable energy, lived only for idle amusement, and used political power as a means of recruiting their exchequer. After the Revolution of 1688 Ireland was as a garden with the soil newly turned, in

which England might have planted what herbs she pleased. She had let the opportunity pass. The native weeds had been allowed once more to grow, and in this condition Irish politicians, who saw the misery but were too vain to understand its causes, had been enabled by circumstances to snatch an instalment of Home Rule. In this condition there were but two alternatives before the English Cabinet—either to buy the support of the aristocracy, who threatened otherwise to make government impossible, or else to fall back upon the people, to level the old barriers, lay open the imposthume, and appeal to a genuine representation freely chosen by the popular voice. Let those sanguine persons who believe most firmly in the regenerative virtues of ballot-boxes and polling-booths reflect calmly on the condition of the country, and affirm afterwards, if they can, that the second experiment ought to have been ventured. A Protestant minority owned the soil. The Catholics, from whom it had been taken by force, still believed themselves to be its rightful possessors. The Protestants were split into Churchmen and Dissenters. The Churchmen had the pride and passion of a long-privileged class. The Dissenters were republicans, inflamed by injury and kindled into fervour and enthusiasm by the successful revolt of America. The inflammable temperament of the people led them always to choose their leaders among demagogues and incendiaries. Over every province were scattered armed regiments owning no authority, and possessed with the conviction that the sole obstacle to Irish happiness was the connection with

England; while the entire population, whom it was sought to enfranchise, was intoxicated with that most dangerous of illusions, that the misery of the country was due entirely to political causes, and was deliberately caused by the persevering malice of their rulers.

To have let loose the torrent must have precipitated a furious revolution. To maintain order and authority by existing methods was to lend the countenance of the Crown to corruption of which the reality was probably worse than even the imagination of the patriots could conceive; and that the choice now lay between two courses alike if not equally detestable was a disgrace to the superior country, whose neglect was the cause of the condition into which the Irish colony had fallen. England, of course, selected to drag on through the slough till circumstances might open some third way of escape. Corruption, however, was employed thenceforward, not to bolster up iniquitous laws, or resist measures which promised real advantage, but to bribe the Irish gentry to save their country from being dissolved in anarchy. Wrought as they had been by the Convention into wild expectation, the mob, in Dublin especially, were savage in their disappointment. The presence of a British garrison alone prevented insurrection. Parliament was prorogued prematurely to leave the executive free, and the executive needed all its courage for the work which it had to do. The distress in the city was real and frightful. Fifty thousand artisans were out of work and starving, and were taught to believe that the cause was the refusal of the protection duties. The Act of Parliament

and the threat of military law stopped the houghing of the soldiers, but other forms of outrage took its place, copied from a Transatlantic pattern. A tarring and feathering committee was established in Dublin: obnoxious citizens were dragged from their beds, stripped naked, smeared with pitch, and rolled in goose-down, and so turned into the streets. The Press, which had been checked for the moment by the persecutions, became as violent as before, and the Government discovered as a fresh and still more alarming symptom 'that most of the abominable letters and paragraphs were written by Popish priests.' The Catholic bishops were 'most earnest to express and manifest their reprobation of such excesses,' and offered assistance in detecting and convicting the writers.[1] Their service was accepted gladly, but little came of it. The Corporation was governed by Napper Tandy, who continued at the head of the Volunteer artillery, and had possession of their guns. The magistrates were cowardly, or themselves sympathized with the agitators. Reilly, the High Sheriff of Dublin, called a meeting of citizens on the 7th of June, where resolutions were passed that the constitution of Parliament was unbearable, that the people must have a share in the representation, and that the Catholics must have the franchise; that a venal and corrupt House of Commons had treated the demands of Ireland with indignity and contempt; that under the Constitution of '82 any administration could have a majority, and that there was danger of absolute

May, 1784

[1] 'Mr. Orde to Mr. Evan Nepean, April 30. Most private.' S. P. O.

monarchy. A committee was chosen to consider the steps which ought to be taken. The committee reported, in the name of an injured and insulted kingdom, that their liberties were insecure, that their chartered rights had been infringed, and the freedom of the Press violated; that the Commons were 'a hired instrument to pillage an already impoverished and distressed people;' in fact, that there must be a new Convention. In the ensuing October a congress of 300 representatives, freely chosen by the Irish nation, must meet in Dublin. 'The majesty of the people would then resume its proper influence, and Divine Providence, knowing the justice of their cause, would assist them in obtaining their rights.'

June, 1784

Finally, the Corporation drew a petition to the King, complaining that the Reform Bill had been denied a hearing, that protection had been refused to their infant manufactures, that their newspapers had been confiscated and the publishers punished. They appealed for help to his majesty, and entreated him especially to abolish the remnant of the penal laws which oppressed their Catholic fellow-subjects.

The High Sheriff carried the petition to the Viceroy, with a request that it might be transmitted to St. James's. 'Gentlemen,' replied the Duke of Rutland, 'while I comply with your request in transmitting this paper to his majesty, I shall not fail to convey my entire disapprobation of it, as casting unjust reflections on the laws and Parliament of Ireland, and as tending to weaken the authority of both.'

Belfast trod in the steps of Dublin, and prepared a similar petition, which was sent immediately to the King by a deputation from the town. Pitt answered more courteously and with exact truth, that 'he had been and was a zealous friend to Reform in Parliament, but on grounds different from theirs; their plan was calculated to produce greater evils than those which the friends of Reform desired to remedy.'

Petitions having failed, other methods were resorted to which had succeeded too often. Another non-importation agreement was drawn and sent round, and largely signed—signed even by the Duke of Leinster. The tarring and feathering committee growing bolder with impunity, 'established an absolute dominion over men's fears, so that Government in vain endeavoured to prevail on those who had suffered to make any depositions against their tormentors.'[1] Dublin was patrolled nightly by cavalry and infantry, but the magistrates would lend no help; and if the soldiers were attacked and defended themselves, there was a clamour that innocent citizens were in danger of their lives from British savages.[2] Every day there was risk of collision between the regular troops and the Volunteers of the city. Every day the Press informed the people that the rights of Ireland were bought and sold, and the principles of liberty betrayed by venality and corruption. August

The summer did not pass without actual bloodshed.

[1] 'Mr. Orde to Mr. Evan Nepean, August 21. Most private.'

[2] Ibid.

At the end of August a conviction was at last obtained for tarring and feathering. A man named Garrat Dignam was tried, found guilty, and sentenced to be flogged through the streets. The city magistrates, against their will, were forced to be present; the offender, with a strong guard of soldiers about him, was duly fastened to the cart's tail, and the lashing commenced. The crowd was enormous. At each cut furious yells ran along the line. Before the punishment was half over stones were thrown at the guard. A shot came from a window, by which a soldier was wounded. His comrades, without waiting for orders, levelled their muskets and fired into the howling mass. They had marked and succeeded in killing a conspicuous rioter, himself a member of the tarring and feathering committee, who was flourishing a sword. Three or four more were wounded. The crowd flew down the side lanes and disappeared, and the rest of the whipping was duly completed.

'I am determined,' wrote the Duke of Rutland, in reporting what had passed, 'that the execution of the law shall not be wantonly resisted, as far as my power can have influence.'[1]

When Ireland was disturbed England's enemies on the Continent were on the alert. Irish officers in the French service scenting odours of rebellion were reported as coming over in disguise. The patriots had traitors in their camp, who reported to the Duke that the agitators were now meditating an open revolt while

[1] 'To Lord Sydney, August 25, 1784.' S. P. O.

the Volunteer corps remained in arms. Napper Tandy and his friends were in the habit of holding secret meetings where French emissaries were present, especially one who had come to Ireland with an introduction which had been given to him by Lord Carmarthen, at the request of the French Ambassador in London. At one of these meetings there was a singular scene. Ten years later the Irish patriots were red republicans, allies of Carnot and Hoche, anxious only to establish in Ireland the principles of Tom Paine. On this occasion Napper and his party 'drank the health of Louis XVI. on their knees.' 'Their acknowledged object was separation from England and the establishment in Ireland of the Roman Catholic religion.'[1]

The state of the city had begun to alarm quiet citizens even of patriotic sympathies. They desired to mark their sense of 'the late seditious proceedings' with proper indignation, and two parishes released themselves from the non-importation agreement, the Duke of Leinster heading the list of signatures.[2] But other measures were now needed. If rebellion was meditated, the Government required fuller knowledge; and 'a new plan of management' had to be adopted 'to obtain exact information of the conduct and motives of the most suspected persons.' 'Useful and confidential agents,' whose silence and fidelity could be relied on, 'who would write the daily history of a

September, 1784

[1] 'The Duke of Rutland to Lord Sydney, August 26, 1784. Most secret.' S. P. O.

[2] 'Duke of Rutland to Lord Sydney, August 26.' S. P. O.

man's motions,' without betraying himself, were not to be found in Dublin.

The Irish Secretary applied to the English Cabinet to furnish him from their own staff of informers. Two valuable persons answering to Mr. Orde's description were sent, and the name of one of them will be an unpleasant surprise to those already interested in the history of the time.

They were both Irishmen—one was a skilled detective named Parker, an accomplished orator who could outmouth the noisiest patriot, and had already some knowledge of the leading agitators. Orde welcomed this man with a twinge of misgiving. 'I hope he is discreet,' he wrote, 'for he must to a certain extent be possessed of the power of hurting us by garrulity or treachery.'[1] The other was no less a person than the celebrated Father O'Leary, whose memory is worshipped by Irish Catholic politicians with a devotion which approaches idolatry. O'Leary, as he was known to the world, was the most fascinating preacher, the most distinguished controversialist of his time—a priest who had caught the language of toleration, who had mastered all the chords of Liberal philosophy, and played on them like a master; whose mission had been to plead against prejudice, to represent his country as the bleeding lamb maligned, traduced, oppressed, but ever praying for her enemies; as eager only to persuade England to offer its hand to the Catholic Church, and receive in return the affection-

[1] 'Mr. Orde to Mr. Evan Nepean, September 8, 1784.' S. P. O.

ate homage of undying gratitude. O'Leary had won his way to the heart of Burke by his plausible eloquence. Pitt seemed to smile on him: it is easy now to conjecture why. When he appeared in the Convention at the Rotunda the whole assembly rose to receive him. Had such a man been sent over on an open errand of conciliation his antecedents would have made the choice intelligible. But he was despatched as a paid and secret instrument of treachery, in reply to a request for a trained informer. What the Government really thought of Father O'Leary may be gathered from Orde's language when told to expect him. 'He could get to the bottom of all secrets in which the Catholics were concerned,' and Catholics were known to be the 'chief promoters' of the agitation in Dublin. But he too was to be dealt with cautiously, for he was a priest. 'They are all of them,' Orde said, 'designing knaves'—'the only good to be derived from them is perhaps to deceive them into an idea that they are believed.'[1]

Parker and O'Leary reached Dublin at the end of September, and were both at once set to work.

'Your experts have arrived safe,' wrote the Secretary reporting their appearance. 'At this moment we are about to make trial of O'Leary's sermons and Parker's rhapsodies. They may be both in their different callings of very great use. The former, if we can depend on him, has it in his power to discover to us the real designs of the Catholics, from which quarter,

[1] 'Mr. Orde to Mr. Evan Nepean, October 17.' S. P. O.

after all, the real mischief is to spring. The other can scrape an acquaintance with the great leaders of sedition, particularly Napper Tandy, and perhaps dive to the bottom of his secrets.' [1]

[1] 'Mr. Orde to Mr. Evan Nepean, September 23, 1784. Private.' S. P. O.

SECTION VII.

Anxiety was now concentrated on the intended Congress. It was not to consist, as before, of delegates from the Volunteers, but of professed representatives of the Irish nation. If such a Congress was elected and was allowed to meet, an armed collision between the people and the troops was anticipated as certain to ensue. The Irish noblemen and gentlemen, though in the utmost alarm, were too cowardly to appear in open opposition, and left the danger and the responsibility to the Government.[1] The Government, seeing that there was a real crisis, and that hesitation would be fatal, screwed its courage to the sticking-point. Lord Northington would have interfered with the Convention had he dared. The Duke of Rutland was braver than Northington, and determined that this new Congress should neither meet nor, if possible, be elected. Napper Tandy had issued circulars to the sheriffs of every county in Ireland requiring them to summon the King's lieges and invite them to choose representatives. The Duke intimated to the sheriffs that such a proceeding would

September, 1784

[1] 'It is impossible to conceive any difficulty equal to that of prevailing on the principal persons here to take an active part to assist the Government. They are not insensible to the danger of indifference, but they hope to lie concealed under the wing of the administration which is to expose itself to the whole attack. — Mr. Orde to Mr. Evan Nepean, September 23, 1784.' S. P. O.

be contrary to the law and would not be permitted. Most of them had the wisdom to accept the warning. The impetuous High Sheriff of Dublin, Mr. Stephen Reilly, dared to disobey. His office gave him authority to call out the strength of the county. He used it as a pretext to call a meeting of the free-holders, for a purpose certainly not contemplated when the Sheriffs had their powers assigned to them. The county members, General Luttrell and Luke Gardiner, attended to enter protests against the illegality of the Sheriff's action. They were outvoted. A resolution was passed to meet again and choose members for the Congress; another followed, that the Dublin citizens would support the Congress with their lives and fortunes.

October

'The leading persons' in the country were hanging back, but there was fortunately one member of the Administration who did not hang back—who understood the country, and knew that Irish sedition was formidable only to those who were afraid of it. In this same lawless summer, when Fitzgibbon was recruiting at Mount Shannon after the work of the session, a desperate ruffian was holding possession by force of a farm in the neighbourhood, from which he had been legally ejected.

The Sheriff of Limerick came to consult Fitzgibbon on the propriety of calling in the troops to enforce the law. Fitzgibbon said it would not be necessary. He mounted his horse, and took but a single servant with him. Usually when he went abroad he carried arms:

this time he left his pistols behind. He rode to the farmhouse, called the man to the door, and expostulated with him on his folly. He told him that if he did not surrender his holding in half an hour, he would assemble the gentlemen of the county, and not only dispossess him, but lay him in Limerick Gaol. The effect was instantaneous. The man was cowed and submitted. Precisely in the same spirit Fitzgibbon encountered the danger which was threatened in Dublin. He addressed a letter to Reilly, informing him that in summoning the freeholders he had been guilty of a serious breach of duty. If he called them together again and proceeded to an election, he would himself, as Attorney-General, immediately prosecute him. Reilly laughed at the threat, called his meeting, and was amusing his audience with reading Fitzgibbon's admonitions, when Fitzgibbon himself walked into the room, and then and there, in the very lion's den, he repeated to these fiery patriots that he would call the Sheriff to account if he took the chair and went further with the business in which he was engaged.

Irishmen admire personal courage even more than they love agitation. Stephen Reilly was overawed. The meeting dispersed, and the county of Dublin was without its representatives. When the 25th of October came, the day appointed for the Congress to assemble, a contemptible handful of gentlemen alone presented themselves. They met at a house in William Street, where they debated with closed doors. The Bishop of Derry had taken warning and staid at home. Flood

attended, but was found unsatisfactory on Catholic emancipation. The abortive effort to supplant the Parliament was extinguished in ridicule, and the Congress went the way of the Convention.

From this moment till a new madness possessed the Legislature, the insubordination of Dublin was subdued. The punishment of one criminal and the fire of the soldiers made an end of the tarring and feathering. Fitzgibbon, who had done the work, to establish the principle, and to prevent for ever the upgrowth of rival representative assemblies, proceeded against Reilly by attachment as an officer of the State who had abused his commission. Challenged on the point of law the Attorney-General was supported by the Judges. Reilly was sentenced to fine and imprisonment. He was pardoned on making his submission, but authority had successfully asserted itself.[1]

---

[1] In the following February Flood attacked Fitzgibbon in Parliament for the attachment of Reilly. Fitzgibbon replied, that in summoning the freeholders under cover of the *posse comitatus* to elect representatives, the Sheriff had broken the law. The Sheriff's power was an emanation of Royal authority, and was therefore punishable in a summary manner by the King's Bench, where the King was supposed personally to reside.

Curran said this was the introduction of arbitrary power. He asked why the Attorney-General had not indicted Reilly before a jury. Fitzgibbon said the case would have come before a jury of the Sheriff's own choosing.

Flood again argued that attachments were an emanation from the Star Chamber, and were not part of the law of the land. The Attorney-General insisted 'that the election of representatives for a county, under the nature of delegates, without the King's writ, was a violation of the Constitution.' The House of Commons supported Fitzgibbon's view by a majority of more than two to one.—*Irish Debates*, February, 1785.

The Duke was able to report more cheerfully of his prospects. He could speak of 'the late ferment' as something that was past. The gentry had recovered their courage. The agitation was now limited to 'a Republican Section at Belfast and to particular classes among the Catholics who were worked on by priests and French emissaries.' Confined to these it had lost power to hurt. 'Rather,' he said, 'the improper conduct of a few Catholics, and the publications of a Catholic newspaper; the avowed disloyalty of some and the disloyalty of others, were likely so to cement together the men of property that Government would be stronger than ever.' [1]

The Constitution of '82, after a near escape from destruction in the violent rolls which had followed the launch, might now be considered fairly afloat. The composition of the House of Commons remained absurd. The means by which it was kept in working condition were disgraceful to itself and to England, and the demand at the sword's point for revolutionary changes having been successfully resisted, Mr. Pitt allowed himself to think that some degree of Reform might now be ventured. The question would probably be revived in another form when Parliament re-opened. He recommended the Duke of Rutland to establish a Protestant militia, which would of course be accompanied by the suppression of the Volunteers. He contemplated bringing an alteration of the Representation at an early

[1] 'Edward Cooke to Mr. Evan Nepean, October 30. Private.' S. P. O.

period before the Parliament of Great Britain. If the discussion could be postponed in Dublin till the subject had been settled in England, he implied, without positively stating, that the Government would consent to some necessary changes in Ireland also. 'The delay,' said the Cabinet letter, 'will enable your Grace to discover more clearly what plan of reform, if the event should at last take that turn, would be agreeable to the greatest number, and meet least objection from those who have hitherto supported the connection between Great Britain and Ireland.'[1]

[1] Draft of a Cabinet letter to the Duke of Rutland, January 11, 1785.

SECTION VIII.

Mr. Pitt's anxiety to restore Ireland to health and vigour was not confined to Parliamentary Reform. He desired to repair the injuries which had so long paralyzed her manufacturing industry; and although he would not indulge her inclination to rush into protective duties which would have enriched a few traders at the expense of the Irish consumers, he was willing to risk unpopularity at home by giving Ireland a genuine participation in the commercial prosperity of England, and so to arrange the trade of the two countries that English capital and English skill should be employed indiscriminately in both. The haste with which the Constitution of '82 had been hurried through had left the entire question untouched. Ireland had free trade, but who was to protect her trade, who was to represent her merchants abroad, under what system of duties were her exchanges with foreign countries to be regulated, and her manufactures or raw products allowed privilege in the markets, or passage through the ports, of the sister country? All these matters, vital as they were to Ireland's interests, remained open, and the settlement of them had hitherto been made impossible by the bondage of the Irish Parliament to the pretensions to which they had committed them- January, 1785

selves. They had asserted their right of legislating for Ireland, externally as well as internally. There was now no escape but through a commercial treaty.

In the summer of 1784, Mr. Joshua Prim, a Dublin merchant, privately laid a scheme before Pitt, which in its commercial aspect was supremely favourable to Ireland—so favourable that his chief uncertainty was whether the English Parliament could be induced to listen to it. Divided into eleven propositions, it was based on the principle of the equalization of duties in both countries. The Irish linen manufacturers were to keep the protection which they enjoyed at present in the English markets. Retaining the privilege of fixing their own scale of duties on their own products, they were enabled by a special article to control the duties imposed on such articles in England. Intelligent men of business both in England and Ireland were agreed that the effect of the arrangement would be to make the Irish harbours the depôts of a large part of English commerce, and must operate as a proportionate encouragement to Irish domestic manufacture.[1]

In adopting Mr. Prim's proposals, Pitt's intention was to present Ireland with a genial offering of national good will, to abolish the memory of ancient grievances, and to open a road to sound reconciliation. The Irish Parliament met on the 20th of January. The speech from the throne recommended the commercial relations of the two countries to the consideration of the House of Commons. It treated the interests of England and

[1] See the articles in *Flowden*, vol. iii. p. 105, *note*.

Ireland as inseparable. Confident in her own sincerity, Great Britain hoped that Ireland would meet her in a conciliatory spirit.

The beginning was unpropitious. Lord Edward Fitzgerald, now twenty-one years old, made his first appearance in Irish politics by opposing the address on the ground of the Reilly prosecution. It came to nothing, however; and on the 7th of February Mr. Orde, on behalf of Government, produced the eleven resolutions which were to form the basis of the new treaty. He went through the substantial part of his statement apparently with general approval. The Irish members were not generally skilled in commercial details, but each of the first ten articles seemed either to be innocent or to contain specific concessions to Irish interests. He arrived at the eleventh, the last. In return for a free, full, and perfect partnership with England, for free commerce with the English colonies, to whose foundation she had contributed nothing, for exclusion of the linen of Russia and Germany from the English markets in favour of the Ulster looms, for the protection of the navy abroad and at home, and the assistance of the English Consular department in every part of the world, the Parliament of Great Britain expected Ireland to make some return. The condition required was so mild that it would be inoperative until the Irish trade had become vigorous, and in times of depression would cease to bind. It was simply this, that for the protection of trade, whenever the gross hereditary revenue of Ireland should exceed 650,000*l.*, February

the excess should be applied to the support of the Imperial Fleet.

The Secretary had no sooner sate down than Mr. Brownlow, the member for Armagh, who had been struggling to restrain his emotions, rose to deliver himself.

'I was hardly able,' he said, 'to contain my indignation while the honourable gentleman was speaking. I am astonished at his hardiness in proposing a resolution tending to make Ireland a tributary nation to Great Britain. The same terms were held out to America. Ireland has equal spirit to reject them. It is happy for Mr. Orde that he is in a country remarkable for humanity. Had he proposed such a measure in a Polish Diet, he would not have lived to carry back an answer to his master. The words of Virgil are often quoted—

"Timeo Danaos et dona ferentes."

I for my part have no fear. If the gifts of Britain are to be accompanied with the slavery of Ireland, I will never be a slave to pay tribute. I will hurl back her gifts with scorn.'[1]

The note had been touched which always drove Ireland mad. Brownlow's extravagant language found no imitators. He himself, indeed, apologized for it. Grattan spoke approvingly of the essential part of the propositions: but the eleventh article he, too, as well

[1] *Irish Debates*, February 7, 1785. 'Duke of Rutland to Lord Sydney. Most secret.' S. P. O.

as every patriot in the House and out of it, refused to hear of.

Orde remonstrated with Grattan in private. John Foster, the most accomplished master of finance in the House, 'tried to convince him of the impolicy of opposition at so critical a time.' Their arguments produced nothing but a letter in which the great leader declared his determination to resist on the point to the death.

'You know Mr. Grattan's character,' the Duke wrote: 'experience has shown to what effect he can exercise his abilities when a strong ground of popularity is given him to stand upon.'

The national pride was touched, and Grattan would have forfeited confidence for ever had he hesitated. He took his ground with skill, and rested his opposition on economic grounds. He told Orde that 'till the Government brought its expenditure within the revenue, he would not consent to the appropriation of a farthing of it. The system of carrying on the administration by loans was ruinous.' 'He foresaw the violent resentment of an exasperated people, to whom Government, if it persevered, would become to the last degree obnoxious.'

The Irish Council, who knew the country, felt the hopelessness of resistance. The revenue leaking at a thousand pores through the inveteracy of the smuggling trade could never rise till the legitimate commerce was expanded. England was holding out what, under the existing circumstances of the world, might have proved

to Ireland a very horn of plenty. Ireland would not have it. The Council warned Rutland that he would proceed at his peril. They recommended an alteration limiting the appropriation to years in which the revenue should not be exceeded, and the introduction of an additional resolution that the interests of Ireland required that the accumulation of debt should be prevented and the revenue be made equal with the expenditure.

The Viceroy consented against his judgment.[1] Grattan gave his support with the new condition attached, and thus modified the resolutions were accepted by Ireland and transmitted.

Doubtless it was well to equalize income with outgoings. But the Parliament might have remedied what was amiss by a yet further resolution of self-denial, a resolution to demand no more wages in future for abstaining from mutiny. The Cabinet well understood the meaning of the proceeding. They did not blame the Duke, but they insisted naturally enough that it was useless to propose the treaty to the Parliament of Great Britain, unless Ireland, if she was to be admitted to share the commercial advantages of England, acknowledged her obligation to bear a proportional part of the expense.[2]

The British Parliament showed rapidly its own opinion of the matter. Pitt introduced the resolutions,

[1] 'The Duke of Rutland to Lord Sydney, February 12. Most secret.' S. P. O.

[2] 'Lord Sydney to the Duke of Rutland, February 24, February 28, and March 3, 1785.' S. P. O.

modified as they were, in a speech in which he recommended Ireland to England's penitent generosity. He dwelt long on the tyranny by which for so many years the commerce of Ireland had been oppressed, and he invited the House warmly, and as an act of justice, to atone for it by now extending to her, without reserve, full rights of partnership with England and Scotland.

It is remarkable that the opposition rose from the quarter where Grattan's first efforts to liberate Irish trade had met the warmest support. The Irish had shrieked at the propositions as a snare to rob them of their liberties. Fox thought they conceded far too much to Ireland. They appeared to him to constitute Ireland grand arbitress of the commercial interests of the empire. The great towns struck in with petitions and remonstrances, to which Ireland's refusal to bind herself to contribute to the general expenses gave irresistible point. The propositions in their original form were abandoned; and an effort made in good faith to bring together the two countries, indissolubly united by nature, and for that reason, perhaps, so difficult to persuade into unity, was broken down by Ireland's passion for visionary and impossible independence.

Still Pitt persevered. He took back his scheme, and set himself to remodel it in a form under which it might have better fortune.

DOWN COUNTY COUNCIL COUNTY LIBRARY

SECTION IX.

MEANWHILE Ireland having again gone wild, was finding food for fresh suspicion. While it was frightened by Conventions and Congresses, the Parliament had been reasonable. No sooner was the danger ended by Fitzgibbon's courage than, instead of the halcyon days to which Rutland had looked forward, squalls came sweeping up from all sides of the horizon. Mr. Brownlow's speech had set the Irish blood boiling, and the passions which had been transferred to the Rotunda had migrated back to College Green.

February, 1785

To supersede the Volunteers by a force responsible to the executive was indispensable to the return of order and the revival of industry. Most of the original members had gone back to their occupations, and the regiments had been replenished from discontented artisans and aspiring and dangerous Catholics. The commercial propositions were to have smoothed the way towards the substitution for this questionable body of an organized militia. The way was now rougher than before, yet it was absolutely necessary to make the attempt. The eleventh article had created a suspicion that there was a Saxon plot on foot to undo the work of '82. The introduction of a Militia Bill turned the suspicion into certainty. Feared and condemned when the mad bishop was their hero, the Volunteers were again regarded as

the saviours of Ireland. Eulogies were poured on them from all sides of the House. They were the sacred army of Ireland's Constitution. They had watched over its birth. They had guarded its infancy. They, and only they, could be trusted to protect its maturing years against the treachery which threatened it.

Truth was too cold an element to suit the Irish House of Commons. To speak truth there was to be a traitor. It was, perhaps, a greater effort of courage in Fitzgibbon to resist the patriot members when they had the Volunteer frenzy on them, than to face Mr. Reilly's meeting or Napper Tandy's Congress. He rose when the tempest was loudest, and spoke with a clear, cold voice which compelled silence, cutting out his words as if with a chisel :—

'Gentlemen have run into an odd strain of invective against Government, and eulogium on the Volunteers, because it is proposed to establish a militia. It is a new idea that a militia is an unconstitutional force. In England it is held the only constitutional army that can be embodied. It is impossible that the Volunteers—be their intentions ever so good or their loyalty ever so firm—can be of effectual service but under the command of the executive magistrate. When gentlemen say the contrary, they talk a language that was never before heard from persons of understanding. . . . If the same men had continued Volunteers, if they had not suffered their glory to be sullied, their names to be blasphemed by admitting into their ranks the armed beggary of the soil, they would have still remained the ornament of

their country. But of the original Volunteers the grea
majority have hung up their arms, and are retired t
cultivate the arts of peace. Their station has bee
assumed by men who disgrace the name, and there i
scarce a dishonourable action which such men have no
committed. I have seen resolutions inviting the Frenc
into the country. In the April of last year the Sons of th
Shamrock voted every Frenchman of character an honor
ary member of their corps. I have seen publication
inviting Catholics, contrary to the law of the land, t
arm themselves to reform the Constitution in Church an
State. I have seen encomiums on Louis the Sixteenth
the friend of mankind and the assertor of America
liberty. I have seen invitations to the dregs of th
people to go to drill and form into corps. I have seen
summons from a major, ordering his corps to attend
with rounds of ball-cartridge, as there might be occasio
for actual service. Will any man tell me we should b
overawed by people like these? Are the Commons o
Ireland to be told they shall not have a militia till th
dregs of the people who blast and disgrace the nam
of Volunteers shall choose to permit them? Let n
one threaten the Commons of Ireland with the dis
pleasure of any body of men out of doors. No body o
men out of doors shall intimidate them. I desire again
to distinguish between the gentlemen of Ireland, th
original Volunteers, and the dregs of the people who
led on by vile incendiaries, dishonour the Volunteers
name; and I say, if I had no other reason than to show
those sons of sedition that Government had a power t

blast them to atoms, I would vote for the establishment of a militia.[1]

Fierce as some band of devotees whose idol has suffered insult, the patriots in the House stormed against the blasphemer of the Volunteers. Their shouts reached the streets, and were caught and echoed by the again delirious mob. For three days Dublin was in inarticulate frenzy. On the 18th it found words, and Mr. Brownlow renewed his motion that the Volunteers had deserved well of their country. Luke Gardiner proposed as an amendment, that the House approves the conduct of those who since the war had gone back to their occupations. This was to repeat Fitzgibbon's insults. Mr. Todd Jones, an eminent disciple of Flood, cried out that he would hear no aspersions on the members of that noble body. They were accused of meddling in politics. He hoped they would continue to meddle till they had saved their country from a baneful aristocracy. 'The Volunteers,' he said, 'must aid the populace.'

Cries of 'Order' rose from the Government benches. 'Is a man to speak in this House,' enquired Mr. Sergeant Fitzgerald, 'of aiding the populace against the Constitution?'

Todd Jones refused to retract his words. 'By populace he meant the magnanimous people of Ireland.' He was forced at last to make a faint apology. Flood followed, however, in the same wild strain. He

[1] *Irish Debates*, February 14, 1785.

said that to speak against the Volunteers was blas phemy; that the gathering of the Volunteers was the most glorious page in Irish history. He moved to add to the amendment of Luke Gardiner that it was no 'to compromise the undoubted right of the freemen o Ireland to the possession and use of arms.'

Fitzgibbon, and only Fitzgibbon, could bring the Irish House of Commons to its senses. He liked to remind them of their inconsistencies. He moved tha the Clerk of the House should read from the journal the reception of the bill sent from the Volunteer Con vention. He then proceeded:—

'Not a man in this House has opposed the resolu tions of thanks to the Volunteers for their conduc during the war. But there is scarce an injurious ex pression which has not been heaped on the ministry because an amendment is moved conveying approbatio of such as retired on the return of peace. From the first I have ever reprobated the idea of appealing to the Volunteers, though I was confident Ireland was in n danger while they followed the counsel of the man whom I am proud to call my most worthy and honour able friend (Mr. Grattan). Sir, I say, while the Volun teers continued under his influence, I feared no evi from them; but I apprehended what has since come to pass, that when they should forsake him, designing incendiaries would make them the tools of faction and instruments of their vile ambition. The press has teemed with writings subversive of the Constitution in Church and State. Every man that has shown an

attachment to the religion or Government of his country has been libelled and calumniated, and the dregs of the people whose birthright I shall show that it is not, have been invited to carry arms. Sir, I say they should be compelled to lay them down. As long as such a body of men exists with arms in their hands, ready, at the instigation of any wicked man who, by declamation and affected popularity, may gain an ascendancy over them, to destroy the Constitution in Church and State, I say Government is not safe. It has been said every Protestant has a right to keep arms. It is not denied. But they have no right to flock to a standard except at the King's command and by his authority.

'I defy any man to refute me. This is the law. If there were any doubt of it, I would bring in a bill to declare it. The gentleman (Mr. Flood) says we mean to divide the Volunteers. Does he mean to admit Catholics? I am not a bigot, but I say the Irish Protestant who would admit Catholics to the use of arms, if he does not do it out of folly, is a most dangerous enemy to the country. The gentleman has intimated that there is a general disposition to resist the laws gone forth among the people, and therefore we should not coerce them. This is reasoning worthy of the cause. But it is not founded in fact. If it was, it would be the very reason for coercion.

'Sir, there can never be a good government while a body of men independent of the State remains in arms. I would therefore wish to see them retire to cultivate the blessings of peace. Any man who does

not array under lawful authority ought not to be trusted.'

The Patriots hooted, but the Attorney-General's courage was contagious. Members who had held high Volunteer commands agreed with him that an armed force which refused obedience to the executive was virtually a rebel force. Mr. Green, the member for Dungarvan, said that a few evenings past he had seen a sergeant drilling a company of ragged, dangerous-looking ruffians, in Marlborough Street. He asked him what he was about with such men; the sergeant said rough times were coming; he was drilling them, to have them ready, and, damn him, he would have them as complete a corps as was in Ireland. In another street Mr. Green had seen a second sergeant with eighty recruits of similar aspect. He enquired to whom this corps belonged. 'Belong?' said the man. 'They belong to nobody; they are my corps, and by God I'll have them the best in Ireland, for there is to be a rebellion.' March

'Were such men Volunteers?' Green asked. 'They were a desperate banditti, and ought to be disarmed.'

Mr. Brownlow's resolution was lost by 175 votes to 64. Luke Gardiner's amendment, commending the Volunteers who had returned to private life to cultivate the blessings of peace, was carried by a yet larger majority. But the House was still half-hearted. The Government was obliged to withdraw the Militia Bill, and to abandon for the present the hope of dealing

effectually with a dangerous body, who might at any moment set the country in a flame.[1]

[1] Lord Charlemont was still the nominal Commander-in-Chief of the Volunteers, whom he dreaded, yet was reluctant to break with. He had issued orders for a summer review, and the Newry regiment presented him, in answer, with an address, intended as a reply to Fitzgibbon and Luke Gardiner. It was hushed up as too strong for publication:—

'My Lord,—Your Lordship's orders for a summer review, and our alacrity in obeying them, are the best answer to the late indirect attack on the perpetuity of the Volunteer establishment. We shall endeavour to protect as well as cultivate the blessings of peace, by holding ourselves well prepared for war; and conscious that those blessings are precarious when held at the discretion of others, we shall retain our arms, not only as proof of present possession, but as a seal of future security.

'Peace, my Lord, is not the gloomy stillness of men brooding over the wrongs they have suffered. It is the stable tranquillity of undaunted freedom, fixing a firm footing on the rights of human nature, and leaning on the arms by which those rights are to be defended.

'We will not lay down our arms. They are the pledges of peace, which is the object and end of our institution. They are dear to us on many accounts—dear for what they have gained, dear for what they will still gain, and doubly dear, by cementing a union between us faithful Volunteers and you our honoured commander.

'We shall grasp hard, my Lord, what we thus hold dear. Should a time ever arrive when foreign tyranny shall give place to domestic usurpation, when law shall be put as it were on the rack to give evidence against the principles of the constitution, when juries shall be superseded by judges, and the summary jurisdiction of particular Courts be made an omnipotent and omnipresent instrument of ministerial vengeance, when every obstruction shall be thrown into the channels of public information and private correspondence, when the business of finance shall be the sole business of the State, when extension of trade shall be transformed into a severe system of taxation, and when Ireland shall be kept as a barrack for the empire—even then, my Lord, we shall not deem ourselves totally stripped and despoiled while our arms are remaining. But if our enemies should ever express a desire to wrench out of our hands this last hope, this solitary distinction left between a freeman and a slave, what then, dear General, can we do but answer in laconic and soldierly language, in a single word, in a single syllable, "*Try?*"'

Enclosed by the Duke of Rutland to Lord Sydney, May 20, 1785. S. P. O.

The battle upon the Volunteers was thus practically a victory of the Patriots. To fill the time, till the commercial question should come on again, there were partial skirmishes on Parliamentary Reform. An independent member introduced a Bill to prevent the purchase of seats—one of those Bills so good in themselves which answer the purpose of no one. Mr. Brownlow was able to show that the saleable boroughs were the hope of the Radical party. 'The most advanced Reformers, men of independent spirit, unconnected with and uninfluenced by the persons by whom they were returned, thus found seats in Parliament. If the patrons were forbidden to sell, they would return their own creatures or would give the nomination to the ministers, and the public would pay the price of the seat to the person who misrepresented them.'

April, 1785 A more comprehensive measure would alone answer the ends of anarchy. On the 28th of April Mr. Flood re-introduced the Bill of the last session.

'Great Britain,' he said, 'had been destroyed by the corruption of her Parliament. Ireland's case was worse. He had wept for years over it. Even in the counties the elections were a farce; the returns were controlled by manufactured votes. A landowner in Tyrone said

May, 1785 to his neighbour in Armagh, "I will make forty or fifty freeholders in your county, if you will make as many in mine. They shall go to you if yours come to me." In the towns, where a form of

franchise remained, men were made honorary members of the corporations to swamp the votes of the genuine electors. Was it not childish, was it not an insult to the understanding to call a House of Commons so chosen representative?'

The true answer was that a House of Commons which should be really representative would throw the country into convulsions, and was incompatible with the maintenance of English authority. It was better, therefore, to leave unchanged a system which, if absurd in theory, at least made government possible.

The bare truth would have been unpalatable. Understood by every one it could not be nakedly avowed. Fitzgibbon's heavy artillery was not needed when the object was to play with fictions.

The speaker for the Castle was Sir Hercules Langrishe, the witty favourite of the Duke of Rutland.

'If,' he said, 'there could be such a mass of oddity in the human mind as that the people were in love beforehand with everything which calls itself Reform, I could furnish a seraglio for their raptures. I have in my pocket seventeen different plans for Reform in Parliament, and I could collect as many more. The honourable gentleman says the people demand Reform. The mob may demand it, but not the people. Peace and industry are ever silent; discontent and disorder are ever clamorous, and ten men and ten women that are clamorous make more noise than ten thousand who are satisfied and silent. When a man talks of the voice of the people, he means the voice of those who echo his

own. Personal equality of representation, the only equality that I can conceive, would be a pure democracy, and in a country like ours, where the democracy does not profess the religion of the State, a democracy subversive of the laws and the constitution.'

The Bill was again thrown out on the second reading by 112 to 60.

SECTION X.

Had Ireland accepted the eleven propositions in the spirit in which they were offered, Mr. Pitt might have induced the British Parliament, perhaps with a bad grace, to swallow them. Mr. Brownlow's burst of rhetoric and Grattan's support of him furnished the Opposition with effective weapons, and it fared with the offers made to Ireland as with the books of the Sibyl. August, 1785

Re-digested and extended to twenty, the articles now proposed for a treaty of commerce between the two kingdoms withdrew privileges which the Irish might have retained, and interposed stipulations which encroached further on Irish independence than the obligation in the eleventh resolution, which had been the occasion of the storm. In deference to the wishes of Liverpool and London, it was now provided that, whatever Navigation laws were adopted by the British Parliament, the Irish Legislature must bind itself to re-enact. Under the terms first offered Irish trade was unrestricted by local limitation, and the East and West Indies would have been alike open to them. Though they might still trade freely for themselves with the Dutch, Spanish, and French Colonies in the West Indies, they were allowed to re-import into England only the produce of the English West Indian Colonies, and 'they were debarred from countries east

of the Cape of Good Hope' so long as the Charter of the East India Company continued.

The new resolutions were carried through the English House of Commons on the 20th of May, and through the House of Lords on the 19th of July. On the 12th of August Mr. Orde came once more before the Irish Parliament with his altered wares.

The changes made were of course notorious. They had been debated up and down the country, and had been received with rage and disappointment. The Table of the House of Commons was covered with denunciatory petitions. The petitioners prided themselves on their discernment. It was now proved that, as they suspected, England had been laying a snare all along to deceive them. 'A serpent was in the bowl which had been offered to their lips,' and simple, confiding Ireland had been all but bitten by it.

The Government had anticipated an outcry, but had not been prepared for such utterly wild extravagance. Characteristically the indignation turned less on the substantial advantages which had been withdrawn than on the imaginary menace to their independence, which was now as they conceived more nakedly revealed.

The serpent which they detected was hidden in the clause which bound them to re-enact England's Navigation laws. Grattan said that such a demand was a revocation of the Constitution. Sir Lawrence Parsons said that the resolutions meant at best that England had a right to extend the commerce of Ireland—an assertion of superiority which no Irishman should

allow. There had been hints in the English papers of a possible Legislative Union. 'Good God, sir,' exclaimed Dennis Brown, 'what union could we have with Great Britain but a union of debt and taxation?'

Then Flood came riding triumphant on the crest of the popular wave. He described the whole affair as the most infamous attack on Irish independence. 'The Irish Parliament,' he said, amidst salvoes of applause, 'will not become the register of the English Parliament. Freedom of the Constitution is necessary to freedom of trade. Liberty is the nurse of commerce; I will not give up an atom of it. I say you have not a right to give it up; but if a Parliament could be so base, so profligate, as to attempt it ("Hear, hear," from Fitzgibbon), I ask you may it not be attempted? Was not every European country free once as yours? Why are they now slaves but by the corruption of their Senates? Could you be so corrupt, I assure you the people will not. They must not. They shall not. I will raise my voice. I will be heard in the extremity of the land. I say if you give leave to bring in a Bill you are no longer a Parliament. I will no longer consider you so. Meet it boldly, and not like dastards fearful to guard your rights, though you talk bravely to your wives and children, trembling at a foreign nation.'

The unfortunate Secretary protested mildly that the House was out of its wits. England had no treacherous intentions. She wished only to attach Ireland closer to herself, and to prevent a rivalry in trade which

could only injure them both. The resolutions as they stood removed the prohibitions which English jealousy had created to keep her trade to herself. They could not fail to be infinitely beneficial to Ireland, so beneficial that there had been the greatest difficulty in inducing England to consent to them.

Orde's words were blown to atoms as they left his lips. All night long the howling gusts continued. Grattan said that if ever the question was presented to them, whether the Empire or the Constitution was to be sacrificed, he as an Irishman would say—Perish the Empire. Curran spoke at six in the morning, 'hoping his exhausted condition was not a symbol of the condition to which his country would be reduced if the Bill became law.' At nine in the morning [1] the House divided. Leave was given to introduce Mr. Orde's Bill, but only by a narrow majority of 19.

Two days were allowed, in the feeble hope that the delirium would abate. On the 15th the Bill was produced, and a second battle began over it

Flood moved, 'That we hold ourselves bound not to enter into any engagements to give up the sole and exclusive right of Parliament to legislate for Ireland in all cases, externally, commercially, or internally.' On the top rank of fame once more, and first favourite of the populace, he treated the division of Saturday as equivalent to victory. He spoke in contemptuous pity of the supporters of Government who dared not show their true convictions. He described them as hiding

[1] Saturday, August 13.

their heads in shame, but undertook to spare them the disgrace of further injuring their country's cause.

Other orators followed in the stream of the popular frenzy. Then Fitzgibbon came to the front and took up Flood's challenge.

'The honourable member,' said he, 'wishes to pass the resolution as a vindication of gentlemen on this side of the House who now hide their heads. For my part I never hid myself from any public question, nor ever will. The man who in office or out of office can stoop to hide from a public question is in my opinion a despicable man. I will never skulk from any measure. If I approve it, I will support it like a man. If not, I will oppose it like a man. I repeat before the House, I repeat in the face of the nation, that the Bill brought in this night is highly advantageous to its commerce, and in no way incompatible with its free constitution. Gentlemen may triumph in their opposition to this Bill. I will defend it line by line and word by word. I will meet their whole array upon it. The clamour that has been raised is as unfounded and as little to be regarded as any that ever disturbed the deliberations of a wise assembly. In every session since 1779, when you obtained the colony trade, you recite the conditions on which you possess it—you recite the British tax and you enact it. What is the difference here? You are permitted to trade to every possession which Great Britain has, provided you adopt the laws by which she regulates her trade, provided you trade as British subjects trade. Every advantage which British subjects

enjoy is offered to your acceptance. I call on every man living to tell me where there is an iota of difference. Therefore let no man talk to me of hiding my head. I support the Bill as highly advantageous to this country. The honourable gentleman says it is necessary to answer the resolutions of England by his resolution which he has read. Let me tell gentlemen it is not very prudent upon every occasion to come forward in terms of indignation against the sister kingdom, because we cannot exist one moment without her protection. Let me tell them here that it will not be perfectly prudent to rouse Great Britain. She is not easily roused, but if roused she is not easily appeased; and in this, perhaps, lies the difference between the two kingdoms. Ireland is easily roused, but then she is easily appeased.

'You say you may go on as you are. You have already a free trade, and that is all you want. You have indeed a right to trade, but without the assistance and protection of Great Britain you have not the means of trading with any nation on earth. There is not a single article in which you can trade without the assistance of England, and I desire by this Bill to secure her protection and assistance. When the people of this country are restored to their sober senses they will see it. The Bill for ever guarantees your linen trade, to promote which England taxes her own consumption 450,000*l.* yearly. On the German and Russian linens she lays a heavy duty, and is content to pay an advanced price for the Irish. Yet still the Russian and

German manufacturers can in some degree meet Ireland in the English market. If the duty was taken off they would beat her out of it altogether, and therefore I say she is a besotted nation if she seeks to quarrel with England.'

Clamours rose on all sides. Eager members started to their feet, declaring that Ireland was insulted. No one in that House should say that Ireland could not exist without England.

Fitzgibbon continued:—

'I am obliged for the opportunity of reflection, and I hope gentlemen who have been so hot on this occasion will reflect that the best manner in which I can show my sense of the obligation conferred on me is to repeat the words at which they have taken offence. I say if Ireland seeks to quarrel with England she is a besotted nation. I say she has not the means of trading with any nation on earth without the assistance of Great Britain, and I wish every man and every child through Ireland to hear me when I say it. I say Ireland cannot exist one hour without the support of Great Britain. When the people recover their senses, and awaken from the delusion and frenzy into which they have been misled, if the benefits of this Bill are then within their reach, they will grasp at them. In my mind we have taken a millstone from Mr. Pitt's neck and hung it about our own.

'I love the Irish nation too well to insult her. Her solid interests are too near my heart, and therefore I will not flatter her. When she forgets her

real situation I will remind her of it. I never will insult her, but I will speak to her freely of her faults, because I have no interest in flattering her; and without regard to the gentleman's heat, or to his interruption, to which I can listen with great coolness, I shall on all occasions freely deliver my opinions to this assembly.'[1]

Truer words had never been spoken in the Irish or any other Parliament, and in proportion to the truth of the language was Ireland's hatred of it. Curran insulted Fitzgibbon so grossly on his sitting down, that, according to the rules of the time, a duel had to follow.[2] In the division the Government majority was reduced even lower than before, and the Secretary announced that the Bill would not be pressed further.

Ireland was of course in ecstasies. Out of every county came addresses of congratulation from the grand juries. Dublin was illuminated. Non-importation agreements—the now invariable resource when England was to be punished—were adopted universally. The populace was so excited with alternate exultation and rage, that the peace of the city was only preserved by patrols of soldiers. The repression of

[1] *Irish Debates*, August 15, 1785.

[2] The particulars of Curran's expressions are not preserved in the Debates. They were too discreditable, both to him and to the House which endured them. In the field, Curran fired first, and missed. Fitzgibbon was said to have aimed at him steadily; perhaps to make sure of doing him no serious harm. He also missed, and then left the ground. Curran called after him, 'It was not your fault, Mr. Attorney, if you missed me; you were deliberate enough.'

the national sentiment by these rude means was a fresh injury. The Duke of Rutland, on appearing in the theatre, was received with the Volunteers' March. He was mobbed on leaving it, and narrowly escaped personal injury.

CHAPTER II.

WHITEBOYS, HIGH AND LOW.

SECTION I.

THE Irish Parliament was lashing itself into madness over ideal grievances. The peasantry caught the contagion, and burst into similar fury over grievances which unhappily were only too real.

1785

To escape the return of periodic rebellions, British authority had established in Ireland two institutions whose function was to control anarchy and to reclaim ignorance. It had established a ruling class and a teaching class, a landed gentry and a Protestant clergy of the Anglican Communion.

The landlords had been endowed with the soil which had been taken forcibly from the natural owners. The clergy had passed into possession of the ancient estates of the Church of Ireland, and of the tithes, which, inasmuch as nine-tenths of the cultivators of the soil were either Catholics or Presbyterians, were wrung from the earnings of the poor of an alien faith, who were burdened besides with the maintenance of

their own priests and ministers. The least that could have been expected from persons so favourably conditioned would have been an endeavour to fulfil the ends of their existence. The great persons of the Protestant laity and spiritualty had contended, with individual exceptions, in a dishonourable rivalry of neglect. The risings of the Whiteboys, the Oak Boys, and the Hearts of Steel might have recalled the gentry to the memory of their obligations. They had used the resources of the Government to drive these poor wretches into exile or submission; and while they were themselves agitating for what they called the liberties of their country, their own hand had grown daily more heavy over the victims of their oppression. Half-drowned already in extravagance, they had burdened more deeply their embarrassed estates in the Volunteer insanity. Their resource was to squeeze once more their miserable tenantry. In 1785 they had raised the rents of the potato gardens in the south and west to five and six pounds an acre. Their functions as magistrates were a jest. Duels were fought daily either by themselves or their sons under their eyes. Men and boys fought and killed each other, and there was no punishment. Young girls, children of the few industrious men of business who had saved money, were still carried off and ravished and forced into marriage. The magistrates looked on with folded hands, and gentlemen of conscience and honour were at length driven to form organizations of their own, independent of the law, to protect their families from these infernal

outrages.[1] Their houses swarmed with younger brothers or cousins too proud to work, who called themselves gentlemen, and were entitled therefore to shoot or be shot,[2] who spent their time loafing in the stables or kennels, breaking horses, or gambling on the racecourses, or lounging in the tawdry profusion of the family mansion or castle. Supported by these modern *Kerne*, the landlord of an estate inhabited by Catholics was a despot who knew no law but his own will.[3] Resistance he punished with a cane or a horsewhip. 'The justices of the peace,' says Arthur Young, 'were the very worst class in the kingdom.' Lawless themselves, they had an affinity for their own kind. Offenders of all kinds found in them their natural protectors, and like the chiefs whom they succeeded

[1] 'Ireland,' says Arthur Young, in 1776, 'is the only country in Europe where associations among men of fortune are necessary for apprehending ravishers. It is scarcely credible how many young women, even of late years, have been carried off and ravished, in order, as they have generally fortunes, to gain the appearance of a voluntary marriage. These actions are not committed by the class I am describing, but they are by them acquitted.'—*Tour in Ireland*, vol. ii.

[2] 'A tradesman has not a right to the point of honour. You may refuse his challenge.'—*Tour in Ireland*, vol. ii.

[3] Sir Jonah Barrington tells an anecdote of an event in his own family, which he cannot be supposed to have invented. 'His grandmother, an O'Brien, had an "antipathy" to a neighbour, a Mr. Dennis Bodkin. One day, at the midday dinner, she launched into abuse of Dennis, concluding that "she wished the fellow's ears were cut off." At supper that evening the old butler, Ned Regan, laid a snuffbox on the table before his mistress. She opened it, and there dropped out a pair of bloody ears. On a cry of horror rising, Regan said coolly, "Sure, my lady, you wished Dennis Bodkin's ears were cut off, so I told old Gahagan, the gamekeeper, and he took a few boys with him, and brought them back, and I hope you are plased, my lady."'—*Memoirs of My Own Time*, vol. i. p. 46.

they sheltered themselves from the vengeance of their peasant tenants by the arm of their ruffian dependents.

Had Grattan been a true friend of Ireland, instead of clamouring for an absurd independence, he would have set himself to recall the gentry of Ireland to a recollection of the word 'duty.' He would have appealed to the loyal and the worthy. He would have called on England to send back the absentees, and England could not have refused. Here was work for a very Hercules; a labour worthy of a place beside the memorable *twelve*. To have achieved it would have been to have achieved an enterprise fit to be written in letters of gold in the annals of the three kingdoms. But far from Grattan was a desire to heal the real sores of the country for which he was so zealous. These wild disordered elements suited better for the campaign in which he engaged of renovating an Irish nationality. He let the landlords alone. He set himself to assail the second institution which England had planted at an enormous expense, and, like an unthrifty husbandman, had left to its fortunes.

The sarcasm of Dean Swift on the constitution of the Episcopal Bench of Ireland was, perhaps, sharpened by his own exclusion from it, and by the political opinions of the rivals who were promoted over his head. But as the serious spirit of the seventeenth century died away the Church of Ireland lost the energy which once undoubtedly belonged to it. For an Archbishop Boulter there was an Archbishop Stone, and Stone was unfortunately only the most developed type of the

prelates who surrounded and succeeded him. The Irish sees were wealthy. The rise in the price of land had quadrupled, in many instances far more than quadrupled, the value of the old estates of the Church. They became thus objects of ambition to the relatives of English politicians, and were made the reward of political support. The Bishop of Derry was a specimen, if a violent one, of the class of persons to whom it pleased the rulers of England to entrust the spiritual charge of the most critical department of the empire. The rich livings were given away on the same principle either by the Crown or by private patrons. Indefinite pluralities were permitted to those who were so happy as to possess influence at Court, and the absenteeism of landlords was imitated by wealthy Irish incumbents who preferred a wider field of usefulness in preaching to the fashionable congregations of London and Bath. 'The Church of Ireland,' said Curran, in the House of Commons,[1] 'has been in the hands of strangers advanced to the mitre, not for their virtues or their knowledge, but quartered on this country through their own servility or the caprice of their benefactors, and inclined naturally to oppress us, to hate us, and to defame us.' The practical work of the Protestant religion, so far as it was done at all, was left to native clergy of Irish birth, the smaller incumbents whose benefices were too trifling to be a temptation, or by curates who discharged the indispensable duties for a pittance of 40*l.* or 50*l.* a year; and although of poor

[1] February 19, 1787.

rectors and poor curates there was generally an honourable report, it was an expectation more sanguine than practical that by such means Catholic Ireland could be evangelized.

The first conspicuous and monstrous failure was in the Charter Schools, founded by men of piety and intelligence. The Charter Schools were the best-conceived educational institutions which existed in the world. They were recommended annually to Parliament in the speech from the throne, and Parliament had responded liberally by raising its grants from 2000*l.* to 20,000*l.* a year. Yet, after the first few years, the number of the boarding-schools was not increased. The affiliated day-schools disappeared. The stagnation was assigned to the opposition of the priests. An examination of the state of the schools in 1787 showed that little inducement remained to tempt the peasantry to resist the priests' warnings against them.

The principle of the institution was industrial education, with the Church Catechism as its base. A farm was attached to each establishment for practical instruction in agriculture. Trades of all kinds were, in theory, carried on within the walls. The children were to weave their own clothes. The flax, out of which they made their shirts and shifts, was to be sown by themselves. The sheep which furnished the wool for their coats and petticoats were to be fed and sheared by their own hands. They were taught to raise their own food and prepare and dress it. They were furnished with knowledge and skill to enable them to lead useful

lives. When their school teaching was finished they were apprenticed at the cost of the society, and when they had served their time they received further assistance to start them in life.

Ingenuity could have devised no better gift to impoverished Ireland than a school of this kind in every barony. Such was the intention of the founders, and care and honesty might with ease have made the intention into act. For care and honesty there was only neglect and jobbing, and therefore it was not carried into act. Institutions are nothing without efficient men to work them. The wreck of trade and the disorganization of labour destroyed the apprentice system. The master and mistress plundered the funds, starved the children, and made the industrial system an excuse for using the pupils as slaves to fill their own pockets. In a country where, from highest to lowest, forgetfulness of duty was the rule of life, the managers of schools were not likely to be an exception. They only did what they saw all others doing. They took their level of obligation from the scale generally acted on. The English ministers appropriated the Irish offices of State to their English political supporters. The Viceroy appropriated the Irish revenues to bribe the patriots. Members of Parliament jobbed the taxes. Country gentlemen jobbed the county cesses, and all alike combined to plunder the poor. In such an atmosphere a generous conception like that of the Charter Schools could only wither like the rest.

But the responsibility and therefore the blame

rested with the bishops. They were the trustees. Their business it was to visit, to correct, to report if necessary to Parliament, to remove incompetent officers. They held that they discharged their obligations sufficiently by mouthing sonorous platitudes in the House of Lords, and by preaching occasional sermons, while they divided their time between their Irish palaces, or their London houses, varied with crusades in the House of Lords against a relaxation of Dissenters' disabilities.

The bishops, like the Olympian gods, were set too high above the storms of inferior life to be assailed easily, either in their dignity or their income. The rank and file of the clergy were more accessible, and were more immediately objects of provocation. The bishops drew their incomes from land, with which they were only connected through their agents. The rectors and vicars depended upon tithes, and on tithes which were raised in the north from Presbyterians, and in the rest of the island from Catholics. The thin attendance at the churches contrasted painfully with the crowds which thronged the chapels. In some districts the congregations had dwindled to nothing. They could not be expected to reside when there was no work for them to do. As the absentee landlord had his middleman, the absentee incumbent had his tithe farmer and tithe proctor, perhaps of all the carrion birds who were preying on the carcase of the Irish peasantry the vilest and most accursed. In his origin the tithe proctor was a parish officer, appointed and

paid by the people, at a time when they were on a less painful footing with the Protestant clergyman, to compound with him for his general dues. As the century waned and life grew more extravagant, the tithe proctor, like his neighbours, became more grasping and avaricious. He exacted from the peasants the full pound of flesh. His trade was dangerous, and therefore he required to be highly paid. He handed to his employer perhaps half what he collected. He fleeced the flock and he fleeced their shepherd. 'The use of the tithe farmer,' said Grattan, 'is to get from the parishioners what the clergyman would be ashamed to demand, and to enable the clergyman to absent himself from duty. His livelihood is extortion. He is a wolf left by the shepherd to take care of the flock in his absence.'

There were gradations of them, as with the middlemen, one below the other. A tithe farmer in active practice of his profession held of another who held of a proctor, who held of a clergyman who did not reside. He pursued his calling in a parish where there was neither dean, rector, vicar, nor schoolmaster; often he was an officer of the revenue besides, and would arrange his demands for his own advantage, overcharging the tithes and pocketing the surplus, and compensating the tithe-payer by undercharging his taxes. Like the Roman usurers in the early days of the Republic, he took his payments in the form of interest-bearing bonds, and when the bonds fell due the peasants became his slaves and ploughed his soil and

carried his crops for him with their own carts and horses, to escape execution.

The burden was the more cruel because the poor were his only victims. The wealthy Protestant grass farmers ought to have been the first to bear the expense of the Protestant Church. They paid nothing at all. The cost of the Establishment fell in the south exclusively on the poorest of the Catholic tenantry. The Munster cottier paid *7l.* a year for his cabin and an acre of potato ground. The landlord took his rent from him in labour, at *5d.* or *6d.* a day; the tithe farmer took from *12s.* to *20s.* from him besides, and took in addition from the very peat which he dug from the bog a tithe called in mockery 'smoke money.'

These abominable extortions furnished a tempting opportunity to the apostles of anarchy. Patient themselves and naturally silent under suffering, the Irish peasants were ready instruments in the hands of scoundrels who played upon their real wrongs, to excite them to political insubordination. The Dublin and Belfast incendiaries were enraged at the threat of the suppression of the Volunteers, and created a division by kindling an agrarian insurrection in Munster. After fifteen years of quiet the Whiteboys re- 1786
appeared in the spring and summer of 1786.

The movement began in Kerry. The inhabitants of a couple of parishes met in a Catholic chapel, and took an oath to pay no more than a specified sum to the clergyman or his agent. They went, on successive Sundays, from chapel to chapel, swearing in the people

everywhere, and binding them to obey at all times and occasions a phantom leader, Captain Right. The oath was generally taken with willingness; any one who dared to refuse was dragged from his bed at midnight; his ears were sawn off, and he was flung into a pit lined with thorns, or set naked on horseback on a thorn saddle.[1] By these means Captain Right soon had all Munster at his obedience. His army was scattered everywhere, appearing in daylight as harmless peasants, in the night as so many fiends. His first order was to disarm the Protestants in the province. Midnight gangs appeared at every Protestant door, and with as much violence as might be necessary, 'thoroughly carried the order into execution.'[2] The next step was to establish a system of finance. Regular contributions were levied to support Captain Right's government. The Whiteboy authority being thus well established, the war with the tithe proctors commenced. The sentence on them was as the measure of their guilt. If they had been definitely cruel they were condemned to die, and the sentence was promptly executed. If their offences had been only moderate they were '*carded*,' that is to say, they were stripped naked and tied with their faces downwards, while a strong tom-cat was dragged up and down their backs by the tail.

The tithe proctor knew the danger of his profession

[1] 'Speech of Mr. Fitzgibbon.'—*Irish Debates*, January 31, 1787.

[2] 'Speech of Mr. Brown, of the University, January 18, 1785.'—Ibid.

when he entered it, and charged for the risk in his bill. But the vengeance did not rest in punishing the instrument of tyranny, and fell in its blind fury upon others who were wholly innocent. The curate had not injured the people whom the pluralist or absentee rector had hired at a servant's stipend. Of him the most eloquent declaimers on the wrongs of Ireland could find nothing to say but what was good. He had prayers in his church twice a day.[1] He baptized the children, married the adults, visited the sick, and buried the dead. He was a scholar and a gentleman, saved perhaps by poverty from following the general road of worthlessness. Except for the poorer clergy the Church of Ireland must have perished of corruption before the century closed. So far as their means extended they had been distinguished for kindness and liberality. But they were the symbols of a tyrannical system; they were defenceless, they were at hand, and they were Protestant ministers, and this was enough for their condemnation. The landlords with peculiar baseness refused to exert themselves in their defence. 'Men of the purest and most inoffensive manners were torn from their beds at midnight. Their wives and children were driven naked out of doors, themselves rolled on dunghills, and hardly suffered to escape with life.'[2] Lord Luttrell said in Parliament that a friend of his riding one morning out of Carling-

[1] So Grattan seems to say—'See the curate. He rises at six to morning prayer. He leaves company at six for evening prayer.'

[2] 'Speech of Mr. Secretary Orde,' March 29, 1786.—*Irish Debates.*

ford overtook a clergyman who seemed in pain, with his head bound in a napkin. He asked if anything was the matter. 'Did you not see, sir,' said the poor wretch, 'as you rode through the town two ears and a cheek nailed to a post? *They were mine.*'[1]

Throughout the south the churches were deserted. The clergy were flying from their glebe-houses to the cities, forced to leave their duties by Captain Right and his followers. Could an example have been made of the non-resident rectors, who were gathering admiring circles round them at the Bath tea-tables, the atrocity would have been relieved by the sense that justice was being done, however rudely. Irony could not have selected less appropriate victims than the curates and their families.

[1] 'Speech of Lord Luttrell.'—*Irish Debates.*

SECTION II.

The Constitution of '82 had been the opening of the box of Pandora. Everyone who was starving expected to be filled, everyone who had been wronged to have his wrongs redressed, everyone who was robbing his neighbour to keep his spoils and escape punishment. Jack Cade's promises were moderate compared to what Irishmen of every degree were looking for as the fruit of that glorious victory. The descendants of the Irish chiefs, among the rest, had dreamt of a good day coming to them, and as the good day was slow in appearing they took the matter into their own hands. 1786

In the winter of 1785-6 Mr. Roderick O'Connor, calling himself the representative of the old Kings of Connaught, entered forcibly on the lands of his ancestors in Roscommon. He established himself in a fastness in the midst of bog and mountain. He had a cannon at his door and a thousand men scattered within sound of it ready to assemble at its call. The peasants gathered about him with idolatrous devotion. Notices were served on the intruding landowners to be gone at their peril. Coupled with the reappearance of the Whiteboys, Mr. O'Connor's proceeding was a startling surprise, and Parliament met in January somewhat sobered after the orgies of the past session.

The English Cabinet had decided to make no

immediate offer of another commercial treaty, but to leave the Irish time to recover their senses. The question of pressing importance was now the peace of the country. In the absence of a police, and with a local magistracy incapable or unwilling to act, the repression of crime was cast exclusively on the English army, which was thus in perpetual collision with the people. The Volunteers had degenerated into an armed mob. In the disturbed districts their arms had passed surreptitiously into the hands of the Whiteboys. The southern province was covered with incendiaries, equipped with muskets, pikes, and pistols, while the Protestants had been carefully stripped of every weapon which they possessed. If authority was to reassert itself, the choice lay only between a militia and an organized constabulary.

The attempt to establish a militia had failed. The Cabinet, still dreaming of conciliation, were unwilling to renew a proposal which involved the disarming of the Volunteers. They had discovered on second thoughts that a militia must necessarily be Protestant, that the Catholics would be alarmed and offended, and that it was 'extremely unadvisable to irritate and mortify them;' while to suppress the Volunteers by force was serious and hazardous, and it seemed more prudent to leave them to decline by themselves.[1] The choice fell, therefore, on a constabulary, if the consent of Parliament could be obtained for it, and the Viceroy

[1] 'Cabinet despatch to the Duke of Rutland, January 7, 1786. Most secret.'

was instructed to feel his way with tentative and partial advances.

To conciliate Irish disaffection was as hopeful a project as to conciliate the plague. To save immediate trouble the Cabinet persuaded themselves that although conciliation had failed a thousand times it might succeed on the thousand and first. Rutland agreed that if they desired 'to avoid measures calculated to stir political passions' they must leave the Volunteers alone; the ugly feature in the leaving them alone, however, being that when a corps dissolved the arms were not given up, 'but remained in the hands of the rabble of the country.'[1] January, 1786

Parliament opened calmly, as if alive to the seriousness of the situation, and addressed itself to the duties which were waiting for it. Flood was in England. Many of the Opposition members had remained in the country, expecting that the session would be unpropitious to them. Party politics being for the moment at rest, the attention of the House of Commons was drawn naturally to the various forms in which anarchy was showing itself. Roderick O'Connor must be taken in hand, or the example would spread. Mr. Ogle, of Wexford, enquired why the *Gazette* was full every day of accounts of ravished women? The Grand Jury of Dublin petitioned against the multitudes of whiskey shops, 'hellish dens' where the artisans were driven to madness.

Lord Luttrell said it was an insult to the under-

[1] 'The Duke of Rutland to Lord Sydney, January 29. Secret.'

standing to talk of industry to a nation which had been drunk for a hundred years. Monk Mason enquired how gentlemen intended to stop drinking, when twelve or fifteen hundred private stills were at full work, protected and encouraged by the landlords on their own properties? The blame was thrown of course on the Government.

February, 1786

Fitzgibbon, speaking the truth always, however unpalatable it might be, told the House 'that the disorders of Ireland were traceable, not to Government, but to the supineness of the country gentlemen. Government ought never to interfere save when the ordinary means of keeping the peace had been tried and found ineffectual. The Irish gentry, when any act of violence occurred, folded their hands and applied to the Castle for a guard of soldiers.'

These preliminary debates were comparatively rational. The Duke congratulated himself on the recovered sanity of a now thoughtful and prudent Legislature. 'Scarce a troubled wave,' he said, 'appeared on the political surface.'[1] The Duke was prematurely sanguine. The state of the South required remedies more active than words. The Catholic bands having disarmed the Protestants, were grown so daring as to attack the soldiers. A party of the 20th Infantry, who were conducting a convoy of stores into Cork, were surprised on the road by a party of Whiteboys. They drove the assailants off at last, but only after a sharp skirmish. The obvious and immediately

[1] 'Duke of Rutland to Lord Sydney, February 27. Secret.'

necessary remedy was to hunt down and disarm these dangerous ruffians, but the magic shield of the defenders of Irish liberty was extended even over the Whiteboys. 'The Catholics being in possession of arms,' the Duke said, 'was a principle which struck at the vitals of the State. Yet every combination of men with arms was so entangled with the Volunteer system that to interfere anywhere directly and avowedly raised a stir in the entire body.'

If Ireland was not to relapse into the anarchy of the sixteenth century, a police of some kind was imperatively necessary, but a police in the imagination of the patriots was only a militia in disguise.

Fitzgibbon had given notice of his intention to introduce a Bill for the purpose. The patriots determined to oppose it; and to give time for their scattered forces to rally, Mr. Forbes,[1] in Flood's absence, brought on a preliminary skirmish on the old grievance of the Pension List. A scandal the Pension List had always been. Under the new Constitution corruption had increased, for the Lords and Commons had larger powers of giving trouble. This only was to be said in defence of so large a misappropriation of the Irish revenue, that to the general expenses of the empire Ireland contributed nothing. She had refused passionately to pay what she called tribute to the navy which protected her commerce. In the Pension List she was receiving, as a bribe to herself, a portion of what ought to have been employed for more

[1] Member for Ratoath, in Meath.

honourable purposes, to prevent her Constitution from becoming such a nuisance that at all risks it must have been broken into pieces.[1] The principle was less at fault than the application. If some pensions might be applied with a show of reason to silence parties in the Irish House of Commons, there were others which were still given as the reward of services which would not bear publicity. The entire Irish list amounted now to a hundred thousand pounds a year, and as Curran said—

March, 1786

'This polyglot of wealth, this museum of curiosities, the Pension List, embraces every link in the human chain, every description of men, women, and children, from the exalted excellence of a Hawke or a Rodney to the debased situation of the lady that humbleth herself that she may be exalted.'

Such a blot on the escutcheon was an easy target for patriotic oratory. Mr. Forbes complained that the Irish pensions now exceeded the English. They were granted to overturn the independence of Parliament. Men were but men, and while ministers bribed, members of Parliament would be bribed. Grattan wound up a passionate speech by saying 'that if he should affirm that the Pension List was not a grievance, he would affirm in the face of his country an

[1] Arthur Young has some judicious remarks on the Pension List. Lord Shelburne, he says, once suggested to him that Ireland might make a good bargain for herself if she would consent to pay 700,000*l.* a year into the Imperial treasury, as a final composition for the Pension List and the cost of her military establishment. But any such arrangement would have made her *tributary*.

impudent, insolent, and public lie.' It occurred neither to Forbes nor Grattan that the real mischief lay in conferring free institutions on a people who were confessedly liable to corrupt influences, and that if the members of the Irish Parliament had not been bribed by the ministers, they would have sold their votes to parties or purposes in methods more injurious to the State.

Scorning alike the bait which governed the movements of Irish politicians and the politicians themselves who railed at the system till their own turn came to be fed, Fitzgibbon flung the baseness which made corruption necessary in the teeth of those who were clamouring at it. 'Let me,' he said, 'ask gentlemen who exclaim so loudly against pensions, is there no man among them who has ever thought his own services deserving a pension? No. Not one. Is there no man who would accept a pension? No. Not one. Was there a man of the 110[1] who would accept a pension? No. Not one. When that Bill which threatened us with wealth and commerce was introduced was there a man of the said 110 that offered to desert for a pension? No. Not one. Is there now a person among them that would come over and vote with us for a pension? Not one, I am certain. And therefore when gentlemen speak against the folly and wickedness of bestowing pensions on members of Parliament, I am convinced they speak the genuine sentiments of their minds.'[2]

[1] The minority which voted against the commercial propositions.

[2] *Irish Debates*, March 13, 1786.

The Attorney-General's language, however sarcastically true, was not conciliatory. Forbes pressed his division, and though he was beaten, the large numbers who voted on both sides[1] showed that the patriots had by this time rallied to their posts.

The vital question of the Police Bill now came on to try many things; among them to try Mr. Grattan's title to the name of a statesman. The Bill in itself was a small matter. If successful, the design was to extend its provisions, but for the present it applied only to Dublin, where the House of Commons had been half-a-dozen times invaded by the mob; where a tarring and feathering committee had maintained a reign of terror of six months; where the newspapers openly preached assassination, and where an Act of Parliament had been necessary to prevent enthusiastic patriots from slicing the tendons of British soldiers straying in the streets. In Dublin, if nowhere else, Parliament might be expected to agree to the necessity of a more efficient protection of the peace. The mayor and aldermen of the city of late years had been uniformly found wanting. The Attorney-General's Bill superseded their authority; it appointed instead seven paid magistrates to take the control of the local watchmen, and provided besides forty petty constables, mounted or on foot as need might require, with power to enter and search houses where there was reason to believe arms to be concealed.

To repress savagery, to prevent armed ruffians

[1] 134 to 78.

from terrorizing over quiet citizens, is the first condition demanded of a Government which deserves the name. A country where girls might be ravished, soldiers hamstrung, and statesmen who objected to such proceedings held up as marks for assassins' poignards, was unfit for the habitation of human beings. Mr. Grattan, beyond all men, ought to have welcomed such a Bill, being himself responsible for the Constitution, and insisting, as he had always insisted, that Ireland had only to be made free to show herself worthy of freedom. Mr. Grattan estimated his duty differently. A state of anarchy had forwarded so materially Ireland's aspirations after emancipation, that he regarded measures for the preservation of order as an assault upon the national independence. The Bill was no sooner introduced than he declaimed against the two score constables as an army in disguise, and the measure itself as a covert attack on the Volunteers. He declared peremptorily that he would obstruct it at every turn.

Fitzgibbon, who was earnestly anxious to get his Bill through, at first quietly remonstrated. After the riots which had disgraced Dublin, he said that he had not anticipated that the establishment of a police would be objected to. A prisoner could not be taken through the streets without a guard of soldiers. The House of Commons had been taken by storm, and the mayor, though he had notice of the intended riot, had declared himself unable to prevent it. There was not a drunken weaver in the city who had not arms

concealed in his house. In the South the muskets of the Volunteers were in the hands of the Catholic rabble. The Bill, so far from being dangerous to liberty, was necessary for the protection of liberty, and he expressed a wish and hope to see a police established universally throughout the island.[1]

The opposition to the first reading, though loud and passionate, was not pressed to a division. When the Bill was brought on a second time, the battle began in earnest.

'We are to have, then,' said Grattan, 'a mercenary army paid by the ministers, and differing only from the military because they will come to those meetings from which the soldiers with decency would retire. You knew the indignation of the House would be roused had you avowed the principles of your tumultuous army, your mercenary army, your ministerial army, which you have tricked into your Bill in disguise. You destroy the ancient charter of our city. You introduce a Bill to debauch her magistrates and dragoon her subjects.'

'The clause,' said another speaker, 'which empowers the police to enter private houses to search for arms abolishes Magna Charta. If a man breaks into my house under this clause, and invades my privacy, I will meet him with Magna Charta in one hand and an instrument of death in the other. I declare before the living God no man shall enforce that clause in a house where I am master. One of us shall fall.'

[1] *Irish Debates*, March 22.

The city came to the aid of her Parliamentary chiefs. Patriot actors thundered from a hundred platforms on the insidious design of introducing arbitrary power. The Corporation petitioned to be heard in opposition at the bar. A Whiteboy committee might enter the curate's house, and the friends of liberty saw nothing but a brave assertion of the indefeasible rights of man. For the police to enter the houses of conspirators and assassins was an outrage too intolerable to be endured. A motion was brought in to admit the Corporation's petition. Fitzgibbon rose to speak again, and this time not in a gentle mood.

'If an argument was wanting,' he said, 'to prove the necessity of the Bill, it is the frequency of these tumultuous assemblies called aggregate meetings, assembled by persons inimical to it, because it will restrain licentiousness and teach these worthy constitutional citizens to respect the laws of their country. They tell us they behold with the deepest concern the introduction of a Police Bill! I doubt it not. If passed into law, it will give additional influence to the Crown! I doubt it not. They think that it will prevent an opposition to the law, that it will preserve the public peace, and that there will be an end to that branch of the police the tarring and feathering committee. There will be an end to that worshipful company of glass-blowers, ruffians hired and paid by those worthy constitutional gentlemen to drag from his habitation any citizen that refuses to take such

oaths as they are pleased to administer, or who is suspected of a due regard to the laws of his country, and torment them with whipping and other marks of ignominy. Therefore I doubt not the plan of a regular police has greatly alarmed the worthy gentlemen who promote these meetings, as it will end that kind of opposition which they are ready always to give to the law. The petitioners desire to be heard by themselves or their counsel. I would rather hear themselves if I were to consider only my private amusement. The constitutional doctrines which I should hear would amply compensate my attention. For this House I have too much respect to consent that it be impeded in carrying on the national business.'[1]

Forbes started up in fury to enquire if the Attorney-General meant to arrest the High Sheriff who had signed the petition. Grattan said the speech to which he had listened was a lampoon on the city. Mr. Brownlow was frightened at the disrespect which Fitzgibbon was showing to the Corporation. Fitzgibbon knew what he was doing. Irish sedition was dangerous only to those who were afraid of it. The petition was refused admission. The Bill itself was passed. Mr. Orde, who took part in the debate, thus reported the result :—

'We have carried our Police Bill for Dublin, which we may by and by extend to the country. Mr.

[1] *Irish Debates*, March 25, 1786.

Grattan thought fit very hastily to risk the trial of his ascendancy, and with most earnest solicitude attempted to create alarm. His success was so very bad, and so contrary to his expectation, that he appeared much mortified, and was at length entirely silenced by the Attorney-General, who rebuked him for the petulance and weakness of his opposition with much dignity.'[1]

The defeat disheartened the Opposition for the remainder of the session. The new police were established in Dublin, and pending further measures in the same direction, the Secretary introduced a Bill for the better protection of the clergy in the South. Nothing effective, however, was really possible without more vigorous action than the Administration could as yet venture upon. Mr. Rowley, M.P. for Meath, a Right Honourable and a person of some distinction, proposed that after the word 'clergy' should be read 'and all other persons.' Orde enquired if this was meant as a jest. The clergy were weak, and were generally strangers to the country in which they were resident. The landlords, if it was to them that Mr. Rowley referred, were the parties themselves most to blame. The resident gentry, to their disgrace and shame, refused to help the clergy, in the hope that tithes might be abolished. Mr. Ogle (himself a large landowner), replying to the charge against the clergy of extortion, insisted that 'the great extor-

April, 1786

[1] 'To Evan Nepean, March 30, 1786. Most private.'

tioners were the landowners themselves.' 'There was hardly an estate which was not let to the highest penny or above its value.' 'The tenant felt the oppression, and not knowing where to turn for relief, fell on the clergy as the weakest and least protected.'

On the other hand, the abuses from pluralist and absentee rectors were really flagrant and enormous. To pass a law which would assist the tithe-proctors was to perpetuate a frightful evil; and even Fitzgibbon, who hated injustice as heartily as Grattan, was obliged to withhold his consent from the Government proposal. He had himself, he said, known a hundred and twenty processes for tithes to be going on at once in the county of Limerick against poor Catholic peasants. The clergy, he said, must be provided for by some less oppressive means. The tithes must be commuted into a charge upon the lands, and pending further consideration he advised that the present Bill should be withdrawn.

Fitzgibbon was right in principle. The Secretary consented, and the session ended; yet the effect was to leave the clergy exposed for another season to the Whiteboys' devilry. These gentry had been prudently quiet while Parliament was sitting. The prorogation was a signal that their victims were again in their hands, and the failure of the Protection Act was taken as a confession that justice was on their side. Notices were posted on church and chapel doors, limiting the tithes which the peasantry were allowed

to pay, and under pretence of impartiality they connected with tithes the dues of the priests.[1] August Threatening letters were addressed to the country gentlemen, written evidently by men of education and ability. The war was carried on with a regularity of movement and purpose which showed that it was guided by organized authority. The few prisoners occasionally taken refused, as usual, to betray their leaders. They pleaded that strangers had come to them at night, and had sworn them to their work with the most horrible threats if they disobeyed; while 'too many of the gentry and wealthy farmers, looking to their immediate interest in the reduction of tithes, if they did not encourage the Whiteboys, declined to take part against them.' 'It was strange,' as Lord Sydney observed, 'that they should not understand that by destroying the provision for the Protestant clergy they were endangering the stability of the Protestant interest.'[2]

So very serious was the aspect of Munster by the middle of the summer, that the Viceroy even thought of re-assembling Parliament. His special fear was that the movement against tithes should extend to Ulster, and produce the union between Protestant Dissenters and Catholics, which the madness of ecclesiastical legislation had made a too formidable

[1] 'The manner in which the insurgents have connected in the general attack the Popish priests with the Protestant clergy is, I am persuaded, intended to conceal their real drift.—The Duke of Rutland to Lord Sydney, August 1786.'

[2] 'Lord Sydney to the Duke of Rutland, September 6, 1786.'

probability.[1] The Privy Council would give no advice. The Viceroy had no force to rely upon but the British regiments, and to employ British soldiers as policemen was to raise the Whiteboys into a patriot army. The outrages at length became so appalling that Lord Luttrell was sent down with a detachment of troops to see what he could do. His difficulty was to discover his enemy. The Whiteboys were everywhere and nowhere. The car driver on the road, or the peasant digging potatoes in the field at its side, the shopman behind the village counter, or the trusted servant in the mansion or parsonage, were the same men who at night were carding tithe-proctors and banishing sleep from the bedsides of the clergy and their families. Prisoners were taken only to be dismissed for want of evidence. 'The gentlemen and farmers,' reported Luttrell, everywhere show a singular sympathy with them. Petty juries will not convict. Grand juries are strangely apathetic, and willing to receive the Whiteboys' petitions.'[2]

The spell was broken at last, by the same means which had ended the tarring and feathering in Dublin. Lord Tyrone had arrested a couple of Whiteboys in Waterford, and by great exertion had obtained evidence to compel their conviction. Their offence was not capital. One was sentenced to be imprisoned, the other to be publicly flogged.

In a wholesome state of society neglect of duty

[1] 'Rutland to Sydney, August 1786.'

[2] 'Report of General Lord Luttrell, September 21, 1786.' S. P. O.

would be punished as severely as crime. The commissioned officer who deserts his post or allows those under him to fall into disorder by want of discipline is justly cashiered. The absentee landlords and clergy who drove the peasants mad by extortion, and gave them guidance in return neither for body nor soul, deserved probably, in nature's court of equity, a place at the cart's tail by the Whiteboy's side. The people were wronged. The law gave them no redress; and when they attempted wild justice for themselves, they were handed over to the executioners. An unequal balance always yields an unsound result; and if justice cannot be distributed evenly—if the whip or gallows are reserved for the poor offender, while the rich is left to his fine houses and three courses a day—the social wound remains unhealed. In proportion as the resentment of the favoured section of society is strong against the rude redressers of general injuries, so among their fellow-sufferers the general sympathy will be on their side, and will regard them as soldiers suffering for a popular cause. No State, however, can permit the wild justice to continue which never strikes the true criminals. Harmless curates and their wives could not be allowed to be torn from their beds, sliced with knives, or torn with briars. Whiteboyism had to be put down. The convicted Whiteboy was therefore to be flogged. But who was to inflict the flogging? The common officers refused, though with loss of place and salary. High rewards were offered. The debtors' prison was searched for

some one who would do the work in return for liberty. Not a man could be found. The High Sheriff was the person responsible for the execution of the sentence.[1] He determined that the law should not become a jest; and, since none else would do it, he himself with his own hand flogged the prisoner through the streets of Waterford.

The effect was once more instantaneous. The reign of terror was over. Timid lords and gentlemen took courage from Musgrave's example. Well-meaning farmers and peasants, seeing that they might count upon protection, came forward with information. Lord Kenmare, though himself a Catholic, hunted down the insurgents of Kerry, 'dragging them from the very altars of the Popish chapels to which they had flown for concealment and protection.'[2] A company of soldiers, attacked by a gang of Whiteboys, in Clare, fired into them, and four were killed. Others were betrayed and taken, and were sent in shiploads to Botany Bay. Luttrell, whose mission threatened at first to be a hopeless failure, returned to Dublin in October, leaving the country quieted, the clergy breathing freely again in their glebe houses, and the Whiteboys prepared to wait 'till their complaints could be considered by Parliament.'[3]

September

October

A respite had been gained, but a respite only. Their arms were still in their hands, and commotions would

[1] Sir Richard Musgrave, notorious afterwards as the historian of the Rebellion of 1798.

[2] 'The Duke of Rutland to Lord Sydney, September 26, 1786. Secret.'

[3] 'Duke of Rutland to Lord Sydney, October 29, 1786. Secret.'

infallibly break out again if Parliament failed to find a remedy. The Viceroy declared himself 'unable to offer an opinion what was fittest to be done in so delicate and complicated a question.' He rather hinted than advised the commutation system, to which Fitzgibbon had pointed as the fittest solution.[1]

[1] 'Duke of Rutland to Lord Sydney, October 29, 1786. Secret.'

SECTION III.

THE disorders were suspended in Munster only to break out in other places. The revolution of '82 and the establishment of political liberty had been the signal for the bursting loose of Irish ideas. An armed rising in Galway in January was with difficulty suppressed by Colonel St. George, who seized the ring-leader at the head of his gang. The Viceroy found that 'Parliament only could put an absolute period to these disgraceful commotions,'[1] and relinquishing reluctantly the system of biennial sessions which had allowed hitherto a twelvemonth's respite from agitation, he found himself obliged to recall the Legislature to its functions at the opening of the new year. The Irish people had to be taught that freedom (whatever its theoretic value to them) did not mean anarchy and midnight assassination, and the starvation of the clergy by the refusal of their lawful salaries. Remedial measures might be eventually necessary; but the leading gentry, alive to the disgrace of the country, agreed that effective steps must be first adopted to restore respect for the law. They promised privately to support the duke in carrying a Conspiracy Act, and in providing more effective officers to maintain peace than the supine and cowardly magistracy.[2]

January, 1787

[1] 'The Duke of Rutland to Lord Sydney, November 10, 1786.' S. P. O.

[2] 'The Duke of Rutland to Lord Sydney, January 25, 1787.'

On the last of January Fitzgibbon laid before the House of Commons the outlines of the measure which he intended to propose. Combinations to commit capital crimes had been hitherto only misdemeanours until purpose became act. The Attorney-General's Bill made conspiracy into felony. It contained clauses enabling the Executive to disregard Constitutional forms in dealing with what was virtually rebellion. The Whiteboy Association had commenced in a Catholic chapel. Through the chapels it was propagated. The chapel altars had been the sanctuary of the criminal when the soldiers were on his track. It was proposed to empower the magistrates at their discretion to destroy any Catholic 'meeting-house,' in which tumultuous assemblies had been held or unlawful oaths had been administered, and to forbid the re-erection of any chapel so demolished within three years.

Fitzgibbon was Irish born—Irish of the very Irish. He knew the people. He knew the working of the popular creed. He knew that if the priests were not to command, they must be broken in and forced to obey. Though he was stern where sternness was imperative, no one was more conscious than he of the wrongs under which the country suffered. No one ever described those wrongs more effectively, or laid the lash more heavily on the right shoulders. In the speech with which he introduced the Bill, he said:—

'I am well acquainted with the Province of Munster, and I know that it is impossible for human wretchedness to exceed that of the miserable tenantry of that

Province. I know that the unhappy tenantry are ground to powder by relentless landlords. I know that far from being able to give the clergy their just dues, they have not food and raiment for themselves; the landlord grasps the whole. Sorry I am to add that, not satisfied with their present extortion, some landlords have been so base as to instigate the insurgents to rob the clergy of their tithes, not in order to alleviate the distresses of the tenantry, but that they might add the clergy's share to the cruel rackrents already paid. Sir, I fear it will require the utmost ability of Parliament to come to the root of these evils. The poor people of Munster live in a more abject state of poverty than human nature can be supposed able to bear. Their miseries are intolerable; but they do not originate with the clergy, nor can the Legislature stand by and see them take the redress into their own hands. Nothing can be done for their benefit while the country remains in a state of anarchy.' [1]

The introduction of Fitzgibbon's Bill was the occasion of one of the most instructive debates which was ever heard in the Irish House of Commons. To the patriots, who believed that more liberty was the remedy which Ireland required, it was naturally odious. Henry Flood was gone. He had forsaken his ungrateful country, and transferred his eloquence to a sphere where it was less appreciated than even at home. He was now a Member of the British Parliament. But his place was adequately filled, so far as

[1] *Irish Debates*, January 31, 1787.

opposition was needed to every measure that could strengthen authority. Mr. Burgh called the Bill a libel on the House and country and on human nature, infamous in principle and motive, and disgraceful to the community where it could find a moment's toleration. Grattan outdid himself in passion and brilliancy of invective. 'Ireland needed coercion, it was true, but it needed the coercion of tenderness, the coercion of justice, the coercion which should appeal to the generous, warm, and noble temperament of the Irish people. The Attorney-General's Bill breathed of nothing but blood. It was a leaf from the code of Draco. The clause for the destruction of the Catholic chapels was a gross expression of insolent and gratuitous intolerance.'

The chapel provision found no favour. Country gentlemen were not prepared for a war of religion, and if embodied in the Act it would be as inoperative as the repealed penal laws. Fitzgibbon yielded to the general sentiment. 'If the Popish meeting-houses,' he said, 'were mere places of combination to rob the Protestant clergy, they ought to be prostrated.' But 'as he desired his Bill to be passed unanimously, he consented to withdraw that feature.'

On the rest of the Bill the discussion went on fiercely as before. Some members wished to confine it to Cork, Limerick, and Tipperary. But it was not a measure intended only to affect the ignorant peasantry of the South. It was directed against the universal lawlessness of all ranks and creeds — against the

Ulster Protestant peer as well as starving Catholic cottier.

Lashing out indiscriminately, Fitzgibbon called attention to a recent characteristic proceeding of the same nobleman who had sent so many Protestant recruits to Washington's army. 'The North,' he said, 'has not been free from disorder. An outrageous attack has lately been made on the property of Baron Yelverton. Four hundred ruffians, headed by an engineer, who professed publicly that he was employed by a certain absentee peer, who perhaps has injured this country more than any other man ever did, at midnight, near Belfast, made an irruption into the works which Baron Yelverton had erected to repel the tide, and where he had erected several houses and stores at a great expense. They destroyed the barriers against the sea, and did damage which a large sum will not repair. For four hours they worked, and then, lest their ardour should be damped, their commander, the engineer, led them into the town of Belfast, where, having dosed them with whiskey, he led them to the charge again. The magistrates saw this, but did not disperse the mob; and now that the injured man sues for redress, the offender avails himself of the situation, skulks behind privilege, and refuses to plead.'

The discussion on the Insurrection Act spread into collateral subjects, and the whole situation of Ireland, in its social relations, came up night after night for review.

Mr. Browne, a native of America,[1] remarked on the nature of Irish tenures. 'Elsewhere,' he said, 'landed title was purchase, in Ireland it was forfeiture.' 'The old proprietor kept alive the memory of his claim. Property in Ireland resembled the thin soil of volcanic countries spread lightly over subterranean fires.'[2] Religion was thus vitally connected with the land question; and in Dr. Curry's history, which had just been published, the Protestant gentry were represented as invaders, usurpers, violators of treaties and public faith, the eldest born of perfidy and ingratitude. It was no wonder that with such impressions the Irish abhorred both landlord and parson.'[3]

[1] Member for the University.

[2] Arthur Young had just written: 'It is a fact that in most parts of Ireland the descendants of the old owners, the heirs of an estate, are always known. They regularly transmit, by testamentary deed, the memorial of their right to those estates which once belonged to their families.'

[3] Of all the varieties of negligence with which Irish interests have been treated, none has been more mischievous than the tacit indifference with which Dr. Curry's legend has been allowed to pass into accepted history. Dr. Curry represents the rebellion of 1641 as having been instigated or allowed by the Puritans, who wanted an excuse to rob the Irish of their estates. He represents the massacre as a fiction, invented by fraud and supported by perjured witnesses. The truth being, according to him, that the Protestants began to murder the Catholics, and that the Catholics took arms in self-defence. Was this account a correct one? If it was, the forfeiture and the Act of Settlement were the most atrocious injuries ever inflicted on the weak by the strong. The resentment of the Irish would be as legitimate as it ought to be undying till the fullest reparation had been made. How vain, how mendacious, how absurd the story is, was shown long ago in the *Fiction Unmasked* of Dr. Harris. But Harris is forgotten, Temple and Borlase are unread or denounced as liars; while Dr. Curry's version has possession of the field, and, being unquestioned, is accepted by the Irish Catholics as true. English statesmen themselves half believe it, and, forgetting the alternative, that if

Grattan brought up the miseries of the tithe payers in two glittering speeches. He charged the clergy with extortion, and with eloquent platitudes contrasted the modern well-paid incumbent with the barefooted Apostle. If fine speeches could have healed chronic wounds, Ireland would soon have taken leave of her sorrows. But the medium which she needed was truth; and Grattan's impassioned sentences might possess every other title to admiration, but true they were not. Fitzgibbon repeated that the Munster peasants were 'in a state of oppression, abject poverty, sloth, dirt, and misery, not to be equalled in the world.' The tithes might be an aggravation of their sufferings, but the real source of those sufferings lay in the middlemen, 'who, having no inheritance, no education, no profession, ground the people to powder.' If tithes were abolished, as Grattan desired, the people would be no better off 'while those harpies were allowed to prey on them.' The landlords, who ought to have protected them, handed them over to middlemen, the middlemen sublet to annual tenants at a rack-rent; and if the provision for the clergy was taken away, the effect would only be that they would exact another pound an acre for the potato grounds. Mr. Browne vindicated the clergy from Grattan's personal charges. If they were guilty of extortion, they had no benefit of clergy to screen them.

1787-8

---

the Irish Catholics were not guilty in 1641 their estates ought to be restored to the nation from which they were violently taken, talk blandly of their regret for past oppression.

The courts were open and they could be prosecuted; the absence of attempt at legal remedy, and the recourse to violence, proved their innocence more than a thousand allegations. 'I wish,' he said, with the eloquence of truth, 'I wish you had seen them as I have seen them, with ruined hopes and broken hearts, despondently sitting amidst the blasted comforts of declining life. Is your pity confined to the peasant? Suspected pity whose handmaid is interest! They embraced a profession on the public faith plighted by you—plighted by the Constitution. You enticed them to purchase education, and with it keener sensibility. Is it safe to sport with property? Is it policy to teach the mob logic? You say the clergy do not reside to do their duty. It is not generally true. But do you do your duty? Have you no duty to your country? to your friends? to yourselves? Do you do your duty? You say the clergy have too much. Did you ever hear of Agrarian laws? Do you think it easy to persuade the famished beggars that it is right for one man to have ten thousand a year and another nothing?

Fitzgibbon finally wound up the subject in words which, few as they were, contained the whole secret of Ireland's wretchedness.

'The right hon. gentleman' (Mr. Grattan) 'has said we do not know the people of the South. I apprehend rather the right hon. gentleman does not know them. I have lived among them almost my whole life; he but a few weeks. I am very closely

and have been very closely attached to them. I will again state what I mentioned before. It is the duty of the landlord to protect his tenants. If landlords would take the trouble to know their tenants, and not leave them in the hands of rapacious agents and middlemen, we should hear no more of discontents. The great source of all these miseries arises from the neglect of those whose duty and interest it is to protect them.'

The perversity of history has stamped Fitzgibbon as the reviler of his country, and the enemy of the race from which he sprung. The Irish peasant never had a truer friend, nor Ireland a nobler patriot.

In debates on these questions, and in the practical legislation arising out of them, the entire session was busily consumed. Alarmed by the spirit which was abroad, the House of Commons abstained from obstructing the Government or making frequent demonstrations in favour of Irish ideas. They listened to Grattan's rhetoric, but they allowed Fitzgibbon to guide them. Grattan himself would perhaps have been less violent had he not been aware that the temper of the majority would be proof for the present against mere declamation. Three Bills were passed of a character which showed that in ordinary circumstances the Parliament was equal to its responsibilities. The Insurrection Bill, or Tumultuous Assemblies Bill, as it finally became law, though it lacked the clause for the destruction of the chapels, was a formidable measure. It embodied in the first place the provisions

of the Riot Act, hitherto unknown in Ireland. The magistrates had power to order every meeting of more than twelve persons to disperse. Persons so ordered, who disobeyed, were liable to be shot. Attacks on clergymen, or on Churches of the Establishment, were made felony. Conspiracies, terrorism, administering unlawful oaths, seizure of arms, interfering to silence witnesses, all these were made felony, with death for a punishment. For combination to deprive clergy of their tithes the penalties were fine, imprisonment, and the whip.[1]

No plan could as yet be formed for the commutation of tithes. The clergy, who for a year had received either nothing or so much only as the Whiteboy Committee was pleased to sanction, were not to be allowed to starve. A second Act was passed giving them power to recover their dues by civil bill at the assizes, and an extremely significant provision was inserted, that 'on the hearing of any civil bill under this Act no jury should be empanelled nor should any appeal be received.'[2]

Laws were still nothing without force to execute them. A third measure gave power to the Viceroy for three years (should he see occasion) to extend to the whole country, or part of it, the provisions of the Dublin Police Bill, to appoint a Protestant constabulary in every barony in the kingdom, superseding the corrupt or incapable local officers, and a body of stipendiary magistrates to assist or take the place of the

[1] *Irish Statutes*, 1787, cap. 15. [2] Ibid. cap. 36.

justices of the peace.[1] Had this last measure been carried fully out, it would have provided 3000 policemen, 520 chief constables, and a trained and competent magistracy to direct them. Unfortunately, it was permissive only, intended only as a force in reserve, and in its permissive form was too weak to resist the storm of vituperation to which it was exposed. It was called a conspiracy against liberty, a contrivance to increase the patronage of Government, and change the Constitution. Fitzgibbon's powerful intellect overbore the clamour. For the present session, and the session which followed it, the Irish representatives had the courage to emancipate themselves from the eloquent agitators, whose panacea for misery was the cant of political independence. For two years of their existence the Irish Parliament addressed themselves in earnest to the active sores of the Commonwealth, and the country gentlemen endured to be told of their own shortcomings, in language which even then if taken seriously to heart might have changed the face of the country. *Si sic omnia!* It was but a lucid interval, and another mad fit was imminent. Meanwhile the incendiary leaders discovered that further tumults would be dangerous. In the face of Grattan's resistance, an Act had been passed which made their occupation death, and means had been provided which, if they gave further provocation, might perhaps turn the threat into reality. Irish disturbance is systematic. It proceeds on a principle and is governed by word of

[1] *Irish Statutes*, cap. 40.

command. The order went out for the Whiteboys to resume their character of quiet citizens till the Irish legislators should be again inflated with their recurring delirium. The Duke of Rutland went on progress through Munster in the summer of 1787, where he was received with enthusiasm. Trade began 1787 to grow. The commercial relations between England and Ireland resolved themselves in detail without further convulsions; and the Volunteers, the fountain of so much poisonous hope, the symbol of so much childish infatuation, flickered out and for a time disappeared.

In the October of the same year the Duke also who had brought the ship into harbour was attacked by fever in the Phœnix Park, and died after a few days' illness amidst universal mourning.

SECTION IV.

The Rutland Administration, taken as a whole, had been the most successful which Ireland had known for a century. For the first time the anarchic spirit had been encountered and beaten back, and the partial establishment of a police in the teeth of Grattan's opposition had given his Constitution a chance of surviving the extravagances of its author. Success, unfortunately, had been bought at the usual price, and the measures essential to the very life of the country had added 20,000*l.* a year to the wonderful Pension List. Corruption in Parliament implied corruption everywhere. When Peers sold their influence, and members of the Lower House their votes, subordinate officials were not likely to be more scrupulous than their superiors. The customs, the excise, the ordnance, the treasury, were still plundered with but faint disguise. The public stores were preyed upon in the open day; supplies were charged for goods which had never been received. The smugglers landed their cargoes while the revenue officers were conveniently absent. Government clerks in Dublin, with salaries of a hundred a year, had their town and country houses, and their shining establishments of servants. Beautiful conditions, for which the one excuse was that Government could in no other way be carried on. Very evidently to an unprejudiced looker-on Fitzgibbon's

1787

measures were no more than sedatives. The quiet was but, as Mr. Browne described it, a thin coat of ashes spread over subterranean fires.

The Duke of Rutland's successor was the Marquis of Buckingham, who as Lord Temple already had experience of Ireland, and had been universally popular there. Temple, during his brief administration, had thrown himself into the spirit of '82. He had been recalled as more inclined to yield to Irish sentiment than had been considered safe at a period of excitement. Disorder having disappeared with the Tumultuous Assemblies Bill, and the dissolution of the Volunteers, it was thought a gracious act to restore a Viceroy whose removal had been so much regretted. Lord Buckingham was received with enthusiasm. The horses were taken from his carriage when he landed, and he was drawn through the streets by the people amidst universal acclamation. They had mistaken his character, and his favour was as brief as the loss of it was honourable. The Duke of Rutland, while peremptory in action, had been gracious and generous. His expenditure had been lavish. The hospitalities of the Castle had been magnificent. He had been personally brilliant and accomplished, and while bent chiefly on suppressing Whiteboys and maintaining the public peace, he had not troubled himself to look too curiously into the methods by which public officials maintained their fine appearance in Dublin. The liberality of Lord Buckingham was confined to his politics. He cut down extravagance at the

Castle, and he was considered mean. He was reserved and distant in manner, while Rutland had been accessible to everyone. He had an Englishman's contempt for meanness, and received the sycophants who pressed about him to ask for favours with cold distaste. Worse than all, he instituted an immediate enquiry into the departmental frauds. The clerks were called on suddenly to surrender their books and keys and produce the outstanding balances. The result was a tragi-comedy. It was as if the police had come unexpected upon a gang of forgers. Some fled out of the country, some cut their throats, some were dismissed with ignominy. Lord Townshend, who had found the same practices on foot, had endeavoured to make them impossible by altering the constitution of the Board of Revenue, increasing the number of commissioners, and introducing Englishmen among them. The patriotic reformers had resented the enclosure of their favourite domain. They had never wearied of denouncing the change. They had succeeded before '82 in replacing the old system. Lord Buckingham, at the outset of his Administration, found himself obliged to revert to Townshend's principles, and at once made determined enemies of every patriot and every friend of corruption.

He was unfortunate every way, for the lawlessness suppressed in the South was now breaking out in another form in Ulster. The reader will remember the Antrim evictions, where so many thousand Protestant families were expelled from their farms in favour of Catholics who outbid them in the market. The ill-

feeling against the intruders, which had appeared first in the Hearts of Steel, had continued smouldering under the surface. The Presbyterian farmers resented the presence of the new-comers in a country which, before their appearance, had been almost exclusively Protestant. Resentment had been embittered by the declaration of the Dungannon Volunteers in favour of Catholic emancipation. The Volunteers represented the Americanized liberalism of the manufacturing towns. The Calvinistic inhabitants of the country districts retained the traditional abhorrence of Popery, and gloried in the recollection of the Defence of Derry. Quarrels had thus arisen and local fights. The Catholics, in spite of the law, were seen to possess arms, gathered from the stores of the disbanded Volunteer corps; and when it became known in Ulster that the Catholic Whiteboys had disarmed every Protestant in the South, and were robbing and ill-treating the Protestant clergy, a Protestant Association formed itself in Antrim under the name of Peep-of-day Boys, to search the Catholic houses in turn, and take away their weapons in retaliation. The Catholics, who were unable to recognize that if they ill-treated others they might perhaps be ill-treated themselves, made the air ring with their complaints. The popular party in Parliament, who had acquiesced patiently when the Whiteboys were disarming the Protestants, were indignant when Protestants deprived Catholics of pikes and muskets which they were not entitled to keep. The Northern Catholics, backed by Dublin patriotism, organized themselves

into an antagonistic association of 'Defenders;' and Ulster on Temple's arrival was drifting rapidly into a war of religion.

In the winter there were again symptoms that the mischief in the South was not extinguished. The permissive County Police Bill remained an unfulfilled threat; and though the outrages were less flagrant, the help of Parliament had to be called in a second time, to enable the clergy to recover their arrears of tithe.

Lord Buckingham required all his vigour and all his intelligence to encounter the work which lay before him. He began well in attacking official swindling. He was less careful to avoid giving the swindlers an opportunity of retaliating on himself. Soon after his arrival, the most valuable sinecure in Ireland[1] falling vacant, he gave it to his brother, Mr. Grenville. The existence of such offices in so poor a country was inexcusable. The bestowal of them on English favourites and politicians was among the most mischievous of Irish abuses, and for a reforming Viceroy to set so gross a precedent was an imprudence amounting to a crime.

Thus it was that before Lord Buckingham had been six months at the Castle he was as much detested as he had been adored at his coming. The disasters in the country were charged to his incapacity. The misuse of his patronage had alienated

[1] The office of 'Chief Remembrancer,' whatever that might have been, worth in itself 4000*l.* a year, with extensive patronage attached.

the honest and gave the dishonest an occasion for misrepresenting him when he acted rightly; and by the summer of 1788 the desire was universal that he would take himself away.[1] At this moment there now rose, without warning, a fresh political hurricane.

[1] No better illustration can be given, either of Lord Buckingham's unpopularity or of the character of the Irish Parliament, than a description which Sir John Blaquiere was allowed to give, unrebuked, in the House of Commons, of the representative of his sovereign:—

'An imperious, reserved, supercilious man, with mean talents, but an abundant stock of self-sufficiency—who, like the Persian monarch, would hide his royalty to increase the veneration of the world. A man whose disdainful meanness led him to be haughty to the humble, and humble to the stout; who was so haughty and arrogant, so hateful to the people of the other country, as not to be able to procure the meanest office in the Cabinet, and who, to be got rid of, was sent away from being the pest of his own country to be the scourge of this.'—*Irish Debates*, 1789.

SECTION V.

THE summer of 1788 was spent by Mr. Grattan in
1788 England. He was introduced to the Prince of Wales, to the mutual satisfaction of both. The heir of the throne, though unbeloved at home, was esteemed greatly in the Sister Island. 'The Irish,' says Mr. Plowden, 'admired prowess, generosity, and magnanimity, as they despised and detested everything mean, sordid, and suspicious.' Therefore, by a singular process of reasoning, they bestowed their affections on a person whose prowess had been shown in fields of dishonour, whose generosity was profligate extravagance, whose magnanimity was indifference to obligations. Mr. Grattan had been received also at the Whig club with the distinction due to the Emancipator of Ireland. He had listened to the complaints of the Whig statesmen against Pitt and the King; and the Whig statesmen, forgetting their own experience in 1782, had been ready in turn to take up Irish discontent into the scope of their political campaign. From Paris came the inspiriting news of fast-approaching revolution, while the singular illness which was growing upon George the Third was exciting hopes in the Whig heart to which loyalty forbade them to give utterance. The visit was over. Mr. Grattan was returning, at the beginning of October, to Ireland, and had reached Chester on his way, when he was

overtaken by a message which recalled him instantly to London. The King's disorder was taking the form of settled delirium, and a Regency seemed all but inevitable. The Crown only had kept Mr. Pitt in office. The assumption of the royal authority by the Prince of Wales would imply a change of ministry and measures. Now at last there was a hope of shaking off Fitzgibbon and the corrupt majority which supported him, and of securing for Ireland those broad reforms which would make her independence at last into a fact.

The English Parliament stood prorogued till the 20th of November. When the day arrived there was no longer a question of the King's condition. The Houses adjourned for a fortnight. The physicians were examined in the interval before the Privy Council, and declared that although likely to recover, his majesty was for the present incapable of discharging his functions. On the 4th of December Parliament met as a convention to consider the steps which were to be taken. A committee of both Houses was first appointed to re-examine the physicians. On the presentation of the report all parties agreed that there must be a Regency, and that the Prince of Wales was the person on whom the office must devolve. All parties were not agreed, however, on the conditions on which the Prince was to enter upon it. Fox asserted that he would succeed of natural right to all powers which his father exercised. Pitt insisted that he would receive his powers at the hands of

November

Parliament, under such limitations and restrictions as Parliament might be pleased to impose. Meeting at once Fox's claim of right, he proposed and carried a resolution that it was the duty of the Lords and Commons to provide a substitute pending the incapacity of the Sovereign. The Prince of Wales having declined a personal interview, Pitt wrote formally to inform him of the Parliamentary resolutions, and to state that he was prepared to propose the nomination of his Royal Highness to the Regency on certain terms which he specified.

December

The Regent, though he was to have power to choose his own advisers—power, therefore, to dismiss Pitt from his councils—was to be prevented from squandering the royal property, to be prohibited from granting offices for life, and from creating new peers. He was to be thus disabled from rewarding and promoting his social and political favourites, while the care of the King's person and the management of the household were to be wholly reserved to the Queen.

The Prince's reply was said to have been written by Burke. It was in a tone of indignant resentment, reproaching Pitt with creating divisions in the royal family, and taunting him with trying the experiment whether royalty was a necessary feature in the executive government. He did not refuse to accept conditions, but he reserved his final assent till they were presented to him by Parliament. Pitt introduced his Regency Bill, but the proceeding with it was dilatory.

The physicians were again examined in January. Though the King was then no better, they reported that he was certainly not worse, and the forms of Parliament continued to prolong the crisis.

So matters went in England. In the Sister Island they were assuming a complexion singularly different. Irish animosity has misrepresented with its usual perverseness the conduct of Lord Buckingham. His letters fortunately survive to show that he was exceptionally studious of Ireland's supposed rights, and careful of her silliest susceptibilities. The absurd haste with which the Constitution of '82 had been hurried through had left the contingency which had occurred, like many others, unprovided for. By the Constitution the Sovereign of England was to be Sovereign of Ireland. Whether, if England changed her Sovereign, Ireland was bound to follow the example was a question which, in spite of the experience of 1689, was supposed to be left open. Ireland at all events conceived she had a right to elect her own Regent on her own terms. She was anxious to do it quickly, that she might show her independence, by anticipating England. She was anxious also to show her spirit and gain the Prince's favour, by dispensing with the ignoble stipulations by which Pitt sought to restrict his generosity.

Lord Buckingham has been accused of having obstructed the meeting of the Irish Parliament to the latest moment; he, in fact, regretted that he had no constitutional power to call it together 1789

before the time to which it was prorogued.[1] Immediately on hearing of the King's condition he warned the Cabinet of 'the extreme jealousy which might be looked for in the most loyal Irish hearts if England should appear to encroach on their Constitution by dictating their action.' But so little was he prepared for the extravagant course on which they were about to enter, that his chief anxiety was to leave them free, and he undertook for them that 'any measures taken in England would be adopted without difficulty.' Had the Regency Bill been passed in England with the rapidity which was at first expected, the Irish patriots would have lost an opportunity of displaying their independence, but the blame, whatever its first amount, would not have rested on the Viceroy. Lord Buckingham at any rate they had determined to drive from the country. Grattan remained in London till January, when the establishment of the Regency was thought to be a question of days. The Whig leader, anticipating immediate accession to office, had promised him that Lord Buckingham should be recalled, that Lord Spenser should take his place; that he should have his Pension Bill, his Place Bill, and his Reform Bill, and be no longer obstructed by the political janissaries of the Castle. He in turn had undertaken for Ireland that she would elect the Prince of Wales Regent, with no ungenerous restrictions, and that she would accept Fox's view of

February

[1] 'The Marquis of Buckingham to Lord Sydney, November 23, 789. Most secret.'

natural right. For himself, perhaps, he meant further to loosen another rivet in the chain of Ireland's dependency. With these promises and these views Grattan hastened back to Ireland, to be in time for the opening of Parliament on the 5th of February.

The Speech from the Throne announced the King's illness, and promised attested copies of the examination of the physicians before the Committee of the British Parliament to explain the nature of it. On the lightest word the explosive material was ready to kindle. George Ponsonby sprung instantly to his feet, and enquired by whom these copies were signed. Yells from the gallery drowned the answer. Dennis Brown and Mr. Griffiths, throwing into words the meaning of the uproar, exclaimed that it was derogatory to their dignity, it undermined the foundations of their independence, to receive reports from the Parliament of another country on a subject relating to the rights of the King of Ireland.

The patriot spirit was all that could be wished, but it was starting off upon a wrong scent. If the report was refused the royal physicians must be sent for to attend in person, and Grattan's object was to take time by the forelock and hurry on the action of the Irish Parliament before the English Act should be passed, to become their precedent. The huntsman called back the too eager hounds.

'The evidence,' he said, 'was amply sufficient.' 'Such objections would result only in making the measures of another assembly the rule of their

conduct.' 'They needed no model from Great Britain.' He invited the Irish Legislature to proceed instantly in the nomination of their Regent. The meaning of this was of course transparent. Fitzgibbon protested against haste, 'which might dissolve the single tie which now connected Ireland with Great Britain.' Mr. Fitzherbert, the Secretary, insisted on the propriety of Ireland following England's example in so serious a matter. Every packet might bring news of the passing of the Regency Bill, and he begged for a few days' delay. After an irregular debate, which degenerated into personal abuse of the Viceroy, George Ponsonby moved that the House resolve itself into a committee for instant action. The grounds on which the Government desired delay were with the patriots grounds for precipitation. The Parliament was again wild with the vanity of nationality; and though Fitzgibbon warned the House that whoever maintained that the proceedings on the Regency might differ in the two countries was a very bold man, Ponsonby's motion was carried. In the expectation of Lord Spenser's arrival, the Government phalanx had already dissolved, and the flock of members whose votes were at the disposition of the Viceroy had already transferred them by anticipation to Lord Buckingham's successor. On the 11th the committee was formed, with Sir Lucius O'Brien in the chair, and the Clerk of the House, not without a repetition of disorder in the galleries, read the documents on the King's health. Then Grattan rose.

'The House had been informed by the Administration,' he said, 'that the Prince of Wales was to be Regent, with limitations.' 'Limitation was an attack on the King of Ireland,' and he would have none of it. 'Ireland was of opinion that the Prince should be invested with the plenitude of Royal power;' 'he must therefore take the business out of the hands of the Castle.' He proposed that the Irish Parliament should vote an immediate address to the Prince, inviting him to an unrestricted Regency.

It was but too plain that Grattan had the sense of the House with him. After two years of comparative sanity, the madness which had rejected the commercial propositions had returned. The Irish gentry were again inflamed with national vanity, and a fresh convulsion was at hand. Close in front, too, lay to appearance a change of ministry; an enthusiastic Lord-Lieutenant ready to make himself Grattan's tool; and the control of the State in the hands of a party who believed that the spirit which ravished Protestant girls, nailed the ears and cheeks of clergy to gateposts, houghed soldiers, and carded tithe-proctors, was to be cured by additional liberty. Having opposed the Police Act in vain in all its stages, Grattan's now most ardent hope was to repeal it, to arm the rabble with votes, and lay the country at their mercy, without a force to maintain the elements of order. And out of these constituents he dreamt that he could create a nation.

The experiment, it was but too likely, would

immediately be tried, and the precipitate anxiety to anticipate England's action on the Regency was the first move in the game. Already Dublin was on fire. The debate was interrupted at its commencement by a riot at the door of the House. The mob had assaulted the door-keepers in trying to force an entrance. A constable had been almost killed. As soon as business was resumed, Tom Conolly, Charles Sheridan, and Lord Henry Fitzgerald spoke, amidst general applause, in favour of Grattan's motion. Alone—for no one but he dared encounter the lunacy of his countrymen in its first paroxysm—Fitzgibbon came forward to oppose it. To him the enthusiasm of Irish nationality was a combination of knavery and folly. To assume the privileges of equality with England, to fly in England's face, and become a thorn in her side, could end only, as he well knew, in the not distant annihilation of the phantom Constitution. Never, while they could help it, would any English Ministry, Whig or Tory, allow Ireland to be really free. Then, as always, Fitzgibbon determined to make these oratorical senators, and the mob at their backs, understand their real position. Even by the letter of the Constitution itself they were not justified in what they were preparing to do.

He first desired the Clerk of the House to read the 4th of William and Mary, which 'declares the kingdom of Ireland to be annexed to the Imperial Crown of England,' and 'the sovereign of England, therefore, to be by undoubted right sovereign of Ireland also.' He then proceeded:

'I am perfectly convinced that what I shall say will have no effect on gentlemen on the other side of the House. Let them propose what address they please, it will certainly be voted; and therefore I would not have risen to trouble the committee at all, if I was not convinced that the measures proposed are contrary to the laws of the realm, and criminal in the extreme. The Crown of Ireland and the Crown of England are inseparably united, and the Irish Parliament is totally independent of the British Parliament. The first of these positions is your security, the second your freedom; and any other language tends to the separation of the crowns or the subjection of your Parliament. The only security of your liberty is the connexion with Great Britain; and gentlemen who risk breaking the connexion must make up their minds to a union. God forbid I should ever see that day; but if the day comes on which a separation shall be attempted, I shall not hesitate to embrace a union rather than a separation.

'Under the Duke of Portland's Government the grievances of Ireland were stated to be the usurpation of the British Parliament, a perpetual Mutiny Bill, and the powers assumed by the Privy Council. They were redressed. In redressing them you passed a law by which you enact that all Bills which pass the two Houses here, which shall be certified into England, and which shall be *returned under the Great Seal of England*, without any addition, diminution, or alteration whatever, shall pass into law, and no other. By

this you make the Great Seal of England essentially and indispensably necessary to the passing of laws in Ireland. You can pass no Act without certifying it into England, and having it returned with the Great Seal of that kingdom; insomuch that were the King of England and Ireland to come here in person and to reside, he could not pass a Bill without it being first certified to his Regent in England, who must return it under the Great Seal of that kingdom before his majesty could even in person assent to it.

'Let me suppose that we, in the dignity of our independence, appoint a Regent for Ireland, being a different person from the Regent of England—a case not utterly impossible, if you insist on our appointing the Prince of Wales before it is known whether he will accept the Regency of England; and suppose we should go further, and desire him to give the Royal assent to our Bills, he would say, "My good people of Ireland, you have by your law made the Great Seal of England essentially necessary to be affixed to each Bill before it passes in Ireland. That Seal is in the hands of the Chancellor of England, who is a very sturdy fellow. That Chancellor is an officer under the Regent of England. I have no authority over him, and so, my very good people of Ireland, you had better apply to the Regent of England, and request that he will order the Chancellor to affix the Great Seal of England to your Bills, otherwise, my very good people of Ireland, I cannot pass them." Suppose you choose a Regent by address in the manner you suggest, and

by fatality a different Regent be appointed for Great Britain, and your Regent chooses to come over here and exercise his authority in person, the moment a Regent is appointed in Great Britain he may send a commission under the Great Seal appointing a Lord-Lieutenant, and to that commission your Regent is bound to pay obedience. If he refuses, he stakes his head on the experiment.

'There is a feature in this proceeding which, independent of other objections to it, does in my mind make it so highly reprehensible, that I consider it a formal appeal from the Parliament of England to that of Ireland. We shall sow the seeds of dissension between the Parliaments of the two countries; and though I do not desire the Parliament of this country implicitly to follow the Parliament of England, I should consider it a wise maxim for this country always to concur with that Parliament, unless for very strong reasons indeed we are obliged to differ from it. If it is to be a point of Irish dignity to differ from the Parliament of England to show our independence, I very much fear the sober men in this country who have estates to lose will soon become sick of independence.[1] Constituted as it is, the Government of the country

[1] Let the reader observe the turn given to these most sensible words by Mr. Henry Grattan, in the Life of his father. 'Mr. Pitt was determined that the working of the free Constitution should be stopped; that the era of 1782 should exist merely in name; and, in the wicked words of his minister, Fitzgibbon, *to make the Irish gentry sick of their independence.*' (The italics are Mr. Grattan's.) — *Grattan's Life*, vol. iii. p. 415.

can never go on unless we follow Great Britain implicitly in all regulations of Imperial policy, and you who profess yourselves this night advocates for the independence of the Irish Crown are advocates for its separation from England. Let us agree with England in these three points—one king, one law, one religion. Let us keep these objects steadily in view, and we act like wise men. If you make the Prince of Wales your Regent, and grant him plenitude of power, let it be done by Bill;[1] otherwise I see such dangers that I deprecate the measure proposed. I call on the country gentlemen of Ireland. This is not a time to think of every paltry disappointment sustained at the Castle of Dublin. If any man has been aggrieved by the Viceroy, and chooses to compose a philippic on the occasion, let him give it on the debates of a Turnpike Bill, when it will not be disgraceful to the man who utters it, as on the present occasion.'[2]

Not Shylock, when he heard Portia interpret the law of Venice, was more astounded than Grattan, when he learnt the value to Ireland of the Constitution of '82. Was the child of his enthusiasm, for which his country had magnificently rewarded him, for which the orators of Parliament had raised him higher than Lord Chatham, was it after all a miserable farce? Was Ireland not independent, then? No; nor ever could be. There is no political independence save that which is won by the sword, and if the dread appeal is

[1] Because the Bill before it becomes law must pass under the Great Seal of England.

[2] *Irish Debates*, February 11, 1789.

insisted on can be maintained by the sword. Independence, save to those who can fight for it, is an illusion and a curse.

The debate which followed the delivery of this extraordinary speech was more like the screaming of macaws than the grave consultation of reasonable beings. If such was the meaning of the Act of '82, Grattan wildly answered, why had not the Attorney-General warned them of it? Not for this would the patriot Commons part with their inalienable rights. The Government attempted no division. The next day the address was carried by acclamation and sent to the Lords; while, as a fit adjunct to the scene within, the undergraduates of Trinity, armed with swords and pistols, were fighting the police at the doors.

The Peers were scarcely less insane than the Lower House. The Duke of Leinster and Lord Charlemont, the Archbishop of Cashel and Lord Perry, were agreed 'on the duty of availing themselves of the opportunity of asserting the total independence of Ireland.'[1] They carried with them a large majority, and out of seventy-one Peers forty-five voted for the address, and returned it approved to the Commons. February 17

Though the struggle was hopeless for the moment, the Attorney-General repeated his objection. He said that he had consulted the Chancellor and the

[1] 'The Marquis of Buckingham to Lord Sydney, February 17, 1789.'

Judges. They were unanimously of opinion that he had stated correctly the character of the Constitution, and that anterior to the passing of the Regency Bill in England the address was not only improper, but treasonable. For the honour of the Irish nation, for the honour of the illustrious personage to whom it was to be presented, he besought the House to pause.

He was speaking to the winds. A chorus of shouting voices gave him for an answer that the address should be carried to the Viceroy by the two Houses on the following day, with a request for immediate transmission.

Thus, on the 18th, the Lords and Commons of Ireland marched in state to the Castle, with the Chancellor and Speaker at their head. In the Presence Chamber Lord Lifford read the invitation to the Prince, and presented it to the Viceroy.

The next packet might bring Lord Spenser, and it might be his last official act. Lord Buckingham declined to purchase a recovery of his popularity at the sacrifice of honour.

He drew back, and refused to receive the roll.

'Under the impression,' he said, 'which I feel of my official duty, and of the oath which I have taken as Chief Governor of Ireland, I am obliged to decline transmitting this address into Great Britain. I cannot consider myself warranted to lay before the Prince of Wales an address purporting to invest his Royal Highness with power to take on him the government

of this realm before he shall be enabled by law so to do.'[1]

Bubbling over with indignation, the senators returned to their Houses. The Duke of Leinster in one place, and Grattan in the other, proposed a present adjournment. They must act with dignity, Grattan said, and not allow themselves to appear to be swayed by temper.

The first impression appears to have been that no more could be done till Lord Spenser arrived.[2] But to wait for Spenser would be to wait till the Prince of Wales was English Regent, and therefore to miss the point of the opportunity. Braver counsels prevailed. The House of Commons re-assembled on the 20th, the Viceroy expecting violent resolutions to be passed against himself.[3]

Mr. Todd Jones, the hottest and most foolish of the patriot chiefs, announced that 'the life of the country was at stake.' 'The Chief Governor had set

[1] Lord Buckingham's conduct was fully approved in England. 'The Cabinet,' Lord Sydney wrote, 'entirely concur in the propriety of your declining to transmit the address. His Royal Highness cannot lawfully take upon him any part of the King's authority till he is enabled by Act of Parliament to do so; and no Act of the Irish Parliament for that, or any other purpose, can be passed, except by the Royal assent, given under the Great Seal. —Lord Sydney to the Marquis of Buckingham, February 21, 1789. Secret.' S. P. O.

[2] The Duke of Portland, writing on the 21st of February to Grattan, says: 'I learn, by letters from Ireland, it is the intention of our friends to defer the consideration of all public business till after the departure or removal of the present Lord-Lieutenant.'—*Grattan's Life*, vol. iii. p. 373. The letters referred to probably left Dublin on the evening of the 18th.

[3] 'To Lord Sydney, February 19. Most secret.' S. P. O.

himself at issue with the Legislature, and there was a doubt whether by such desperate conduct he had not virtually abdicated.' 'The situation,' he said, 'was awful.' 'In silent anxiety Ireland confided in her Parliament, and demanded an unimpeached Constitution.'

Mr. Grattan followed. He moved that, the Viceroy having refused to transmit the address to the Prince, a deputation should be chosen from the Lords and Commons to carry it over; and this being assented to, he proposed next a formal resolution that, in addressing his Royal Highness, the Parliament of Ireland had exercised an undoubted right.

On the first motion Fitzgibbon had been passive; on the second he again came forward to confront the tempest. Though he was liable, as he well knew, to be called out by every bellowing patriot, and to be made to answer for his words to twenty champions of liberty at the pistol's mouth, he again cautioned the House 'how it followed the honourable gentleman in his ill-advised and desperate speculation.'

'Let me tell the gentlemen of Ireland,' he said, 'that the only security by which they hold their property, the only security they have for the present Constitution in Church and State, is the connexion of the Irish Crown with, and its dependence upon, the Crown of England. That connexion and that dependence have been sealed with the best blood of this country. If they are not duped into idle and fantastical speculations under the pretence of asserting

national dignity and independence, they will feel the effects to their sorrow. For give me leave to say, sir, that when we speak of the people of Ireland, it is a melancholy truth that we do not speak of the great body of the people. This is a subject on which it is painful to me to be obliged to touch in this assembly; but when I see the right honourable member driving the gentlemen of Ireland to the verge of a precipice, it is time to speak out. . . . Sir, the ancient nobility and gentry of this kingdom have been hardly treated. The Act by which most of us hold our estates was an Act of violence—an Act subverting the first principles of the Common Law in England and Ireland. I speak of the Act of Settlement; and that gentlemen may know the extent to which that summary confiscation has gone, I will tell them that every acre of land which pays quit-rent to the Crown is held by title derived under the Act of Settlement. So I trust gentlemen on the opposite benches will deem it worthy of consideration how far it may be prudent to pursue the successive claims of dignified and unequivocal independence made for Ireland by the right honourable gentleman.

'So long as we remain satisfied with the Constitution as settled in '82, so long as we use our opportunities to cement the union of the Crowns and cultivate the affection and confidence of the British nation, we shall cultivate peace, good order, and prosperity in this country.

'If in a moment of frenzy the two Houses of

Parliament of this country are to sacrifice their connexion with the Crown of England in pursuit of paradoxical phantoms, perhaps we may live to see Ireland once more indebted to a British army for the restoration of her civil and religious liberty. Do you suppose the British nation will submit to the claim now set up by the Irish Parliament? If the address of both Houses can invest the Prince of Wales with Royal power in this country, the same address could convey the same powers to Louis XVI., or to his Holiness the Pope, or to the right honourable mover of this resolution.

'It is impossible the assertion of this claim will not again commit this country with Great Britain, and if by fatality we are committed, what must be the event? We are committing ourselves against the law and against the Constitution, and in such a contest Ireland must fall.'[1]

Fitzgibbon's words might be remembered afterwards. In the present humour of men they fell like rain-drops in water, and swelled the volume of insanity. Ireland bravely asserted by vote 'her undoubted rights.' Grattan moved and carried another resolution,[2] that Lord Buckingham's refusal to submit his address was ill-advised and unconstitutional. The Duke of Leinster, Lord Charlemont, Tom Conolly, Mr. O'Neil, and William Ponsonby, were selected as a deputation to wait personally on the Prince, and they would have

[1] *Irish Debates*, February 20, 1789.

[2] By 119 votes to 78.

sailed on the evening of the 21st but for a severe easterly gale.[1]

The same wind which detained them in harbour brought over news which chilled the patriotic heart. The King was rapidly recovering. The Duke of Portland reported that the Opposition had been unable to prevent an adjournment of the Regency Bill. The Prince of Wales could not command the Great Seal till it was passed, and Lord Spenser's departure for Ireland was therefore indefinitely postponed.

---

[1] So childish was the stilted stage play, that the deputation were going, uncertain whether to present the address or not, if they found the English Regency still undetermined on their arrival. The opinion of the lawyers that they were committing treason had frightened them; and Grattan, when they pressed for positive directions, had declined to decide.—The Marquis of Buckingham to Lord Sydney, February 21. Secret.

SECTION VI.

Patriotic effervescences are often irrational. They
February, 1789 are only occasionally vile. The sequel of the explosion on the Regency forms a characteristic episode in Irish Parliamentary history. The Duke of Leinster, Lord Shannon, Charles Sheridan, William Ponsonby, and many other members of both Houses who had been enthusiastic promoters of the address, held at the same time lucrative offices under the Crown. The contingency of the King's recovery had not occurred to them. They had gone on fearlessly in the confident hope of Lord Spenser's coming, when they might rather look for fresh promotion than risk the loss of what they held already. If the Prince's father became again capable of discharging his functions, the Marquis of Buckingham would remain at the Castle, and they saw with horror impending over them immediate retribution for the part which they had played. The complete recovery was still only a possibility, but it was necessary to be prepared for either alternative. Twenty peers and thirty-seven commoners were the number compromised—members of one House or the other who had pledged their service to the Crown for valuable consideration, and were in danger for breach of contract. They were aware that they could not trust one another, and that each if left to himself might seek to make his peace at the expense of his compan-

ions. With the Duke of Leinster and Lord Charlemont at their head, they set their names to a round-robin, in which they bound themselves as a body to make Government impossible should the Viceroy venture to punish either of them for his late vote by loss of office or pension.

Their fears having been thus secured, the deputation sailed for Holyhead, while Grattan determined, if possible, to force Lord Buckingham to resign, and on the 25th of February moved a limitation of the supplies to two months.

Mr. Brownlow, in seconding this motion, reminded the House that if the supplies were granted for the usual time, the Viceroy might imitate Lord Townshend and prorogue. The situation had so closely reproduced itself, that if the King's recovery became a fact, an attempt at a similar solution might be expected with certainty.

Fitzgibbon, alluding scornfully to the round-robin, and anticipating the consequences, said he was sorry to hear the spirit of Whiteboyism had penetrated Parliament. He had been informed of a combination among distinguished lords and gentlemen which, if it had been proved against a tithe-proctor, would have made the combining parties liable to be whipped at the cart's tail. As to what Mr. Brownlow had said of Lord Townshend and the prorogation, 'he remembered it well. He remembered the same Parliament afterwards voting Lord Townshend an address of thanks, and the majority which passed it had cost the nation

half a million of money.' 'Mr. Grattan's motion,' he added, with cool contempt, 'might, if carried, lead to a similar address, which would cost half a million more, and he should therefore oppose it.'

Grattan's motion *was* carried, and Fitzgibbon's prophecy proved nearly true. The farce was almost over. The same 25th of February the Duke of Leinster and his companions reached London and presented their address. The Prince thanked Ireland warmly, but was obliged, he said, 'to delay his final answer in consequence of the fortunate change which had taken place.' On the first of March official information reached Dublin that the King's health was restored, and the necessity for a Regency at an end.

If Lord Buckingham was to continue Viceroy, it was impossible for him to pass over the round-robin. 'The object of it,' he said himself, 'was to compel him to quit the kingdom.' 'The aristocracy, who had been broken once under his Majesty's direction,' had again combined against English authority, and 'must be broken a second time,' but they could be broken only 'by measures of the utmost decision and severity.'[1] Grattan, too, knew that he had gone too far to retire. He knew that his majority would melt from him if the source of patronage was to remain unchanged. While the Viceroy was meditating when and how to strike, Grattan endeavoured to drag the House of Commons with him, while its ranks were still unbroken, into a series of hostile resolutions,

[1] 'To Lord Sydney, March 1, 1789.' S. P. O.

one aimed specially at Buckingham himself, condemning the grant of high offices of State to absentees; another, striking at the Pension List; a third, binding the House to repeal Fitzgibbon's Police Bill, which he hated with the instinct of a revolutionist. He had been prompt; for final news from England arrived only in the last days of February, and the resolutions were introduced on the 3rd of March. But he was still too late. His most trusted followers were already meditating retreat. An article had appeared in the *Freeman's Journal*, written by a Mr. Higgins, reflecting on the '82 Constitution, and insisting that for so imperfect a piece of legislation, as it now proved to be, the great liberator had been too precipitately rewarded. Mr. Parsons remarked in the House, in the same cynical strain, on Grattan's 'bungling.' The House listened with toleration, if not with favour; Grattan could not bear it, and forgot himself. The honourable gentleman, he said, was not original. He was repeating a charge which had been expressed better elsewhere, but whether said better or said worse, it was false. Mr. Higgins was a liar. The *Freeman's Journal* was a liar. The authority from which Mr. Parsons drew his argument was a liar, a pitiful public liar. He did not mean that the right honourable gentleman was a liar, but the paper from which he took his accusation was a liar, a pitiful public liar. March

Parsons stepped across the floor and said a few words to Grattan, 'not recorded for the honour of

Parliament.' Shouts rose on all sides of 'Custody!' The galleries were cleared, and for two hours the House was frantic.[1]

When order was restored, Mr. Corry, on behalf of the Government, moved an adjournment; and a division of 115 to 106 in favour of the Castle informed the world that the crisis was over, and that the apostate members had returned to their duties.

Both sides had exerted themselves to the utmost. Grattan, whose resolutions had been originally more violent, had modified them to conciliate support. 'We were convinced,' said the Viceroy, on the other hand, 'that it was essential to the peace of Ireland and to the existence of the Government that the attempt should be defeated.'[2] Lord Townshend's precedent had been copied as Fitzgibbon foretold, and the usual influences had been employed with the usual success.

To the declaration against an increase of the Pension List, Lord Buckingham was not in principle opposed. Mr. Forbes had introduced an annual Bill on this subject. The Government had this year been neutral, the Viceroy was anxious to end a vexatious subject, and the Bill had been read a third time. It was a compromise, restricting the Civil Pensions to 80,000*l.*; and by limiting the abuse, was understood to recognize them within the limit defined. It established the principle that no one holding a pension from the

[1] PLOWDEN, vol. iii. p. 236-7.

[2] 'The Marquis of Buckingham to Lord Sydney, March 4, 1789.' S. P. O.

Crown could sit in the House of Commons; and the Viceroy, who really hated the detestable process by which the Government majority had been maintained, had congratulated himself on the prospect of being rid of it,[1] and rejoiced in the acquisition of a means of clearing the House of unprincipled and troublesome members.

The promotion of a measure, however, so desirable in itself, had to yield at the present moment to the need of punishing the subscribers of the round-robin. The Leinster-Ponsonby clique could not be allowed to defy the Crown; and when this delicate matter came to be discussed in Council, it was discovered that 'so violent and dangerous a combination could only be destroyed by a considerable increase in the Pension List.' 'It was unwise to close the door at a time when every exertion had to be made.'[2] To this view of the matter the Cabinet agreed. Mr. Forbes's measure was

[1] 'The Marquis of Buckingham to Lord Sydney, March 20. Secret.' Lord Buckingham's words indicate that Government had all along been in favour of this provision, and that the difficulty had not been at the Castle, but in the Parliament, which was in love with its own corruption:

'Another principle,' he said, 'is established in this Bill, entirely novel in the Statute Book, though often attempted by different Governments, I mean the principle of vacating, by pensions or otherwise, the seats of members of the House of Commons. I need not explain to your lordship the manifest advantages of such a power to be lodged in the Crown. His majesty's service has often suffered materially from the want of it, and the Opposition has always been particularly jealous on this subject, and I am inclined to believe they would not have passed this clause had they clearly seen the operation of it. I am not blind to the danger of suffering so material an innovation in the system by which the Government of this kingdom has been so long administered, nor would I have consented to the second reading, if I had not conceived the Government would be essentially strengthened by it.'

[2] 'To Lord Sydney, March 20. Most secret.'

thrown out by order in its last stage in the House of Lords, and the means of corruption thus reserved were freely lavished, preparatory to inflicting the intended chastisement.

Seeing how things were going, the guilty fifty-seven were now anxious to make terms. They first made advances in a body. Lord Buckingham 'refused to treat with them collectively,' though professing himself 'willing to consider the representations of individuals for themselves, if they would disclaim the written association.' Too well they knew his meaning; too well they foresaw the sure effect of such invitation; well aware that each, if he could, would scramble on the other's back to save himself from drowning. The noble lords and gentlemen who were lately so valiant thought only how each could save his own miserable skin. Those who felt most secure of being able to make terms clamoured that the round-robin should be burnt; those of 'less influence' clung desperately to it as to a raft on the waves. To Fitzgibbon, who had denounced them as Whiteboys who ought to be whipped, the penitent suppliants came now suing for forgiveness. They told him that the association was dissolved. They promised, that if he insisted on it, the bond should be destroyed in his presence.[1] Lord Shannon, Lord Clifden, Lord Loftus, Hely Hutchinson, 'and many other members of both Houses,' begged him to assure the Viceroy 'that they did not wish to oppose

[1] Apparently, Fitzgibbon preferred that the round-robin should survive among the curiosities of the Irish Parliament. A fac-simile of it will be found in 'Sir Jonah Barrington's Historical Memoirs.'

his majesty's Government.' 'They laid themselves at his majesty's feet with every expression of duty, and of their humble hopes, by their future support, to remove every unfavourable impression from his majesty's mind.'

The humiliation was held to be penalty sufficient.

'Under these circumstances,' Lord Buckingham wrote on the 23rd of March, 'I have not hesitated in authorizing the Attorney-General to declare that it was not my intention to recommend to his majesty the dismissal of any of those gentlemen with whom he had conversed, or that might accede immediately to the same declaration of submission. It is, however, expressly declared that the King's Government is under no engagements for future favour or countenance, either in their counties or elections, to any of those noblemen and gentlemen; and it is equally stipulated that any engagements to those who have zealously and uniformly supported Government shall be maintained, though the arrangements may interfere with the former engagements which had been made to those members when supporting the Administration.'[1]

The great peers and commoners who were so ready to sacrifice honour and principle to save their pensions and sinecures were most of them the owners of estates large enough to have enabled them to afford the luxury of a political conscience. Familiarity with corruption had blunted the perception of its shamefulness. There were still found, however, a few leaders who, at the last moment, refused to bend. The Duke of Leinster,

[1] 'To Lord Sydney, March 23.' S. P. O.

the two Ponsonbies, and others who were connected with Fox and Portland, stood out alike against the entreaties of their companions and the menaces of the Castle. A lingering remnant of honour so far influenced the rest of the subscribers that they affected to hesitate to make separate terms. They insisted that Buckingham must grant 'a general amnesty,' but they allowed him to attach as a condition that the bond must be regarded as dissolved, and that the parties to it must promise, collectively and severally, to abstain from factious opposition to Lord Buckingham during the rest of his viceroyalty. The Viceroy's consent satisfied the consciences of the majority. Shannon,[1] Loftus, and Clifden authorized Fitzgibbon to say that the association was now really at an end, and if Lord Buckingham would have accepted a general declaration, the irreconcilables would have probably been contented to leave him undisturbed.

The victory had been too expensive, however, to be left half won. Lord Buckingham properly insisted on receiving the promise from each of the subscribers who held office. The Duke of Leinster was Master of the Rolls. George Ponsonby had a high place on the Board of Revenue. William Ponsonby was Postmaster-General. With the Duke and William Ponsonby, who had gone on the deputation to England, it was especially necessary to be firm.

[1] Mr. Henry Grattan places Lord Shannon in the list of those who stood out and lost their offices. I know not what was Mr. Grattan's authority. The Viceroy's letters speak of him throughout as the most eager of the whole party to be restored to favour.

The engagement which they were asked to give was but trifling, and their decision was not arrived at without effort. The Duke considered for three days before he gave his conclusive refusal. William Ponsonby pretended illness, but at last wrote an answer to the Secretary, which was equally explicit.[1]

Ponsonby was made the protomartyr, as Burke was not ashamed to call him. Never did victim of intrigue and vanity suffer in a cause more contemptible.[2] The Viceroy, sorry, as he described himself, to dismiss a man from his majesty's service who stated his objections to be personal against himself, ordered Ponsonby's immediate removal. His friends attempted to make it 'a casus fœderis, on which the subscribers were bound to re-unite.' Some positively refused; others were 'cautiously indisposed.' The Viceroy saw that he might proceed safely, and the Treasurer of the Post-office, Mr. Lodge Morris, was taken next in hand. He, too, replied in writing, and with deliberate insolence.[3] The Viceroy enclosed it to Lord Sydney, and

[1] 'Sir,—I intend to support the usual supplies, and his majesty's Government in this country; but I will not enter into any engagement whatever with my Lord Buckingham. And as some misconceptions have arisen in consequence of verbal communications with his Excellency, I take the liberty of giving this answer in writing.

'W. B. PONSONBY.'

[2] 'I am charmed with what I hear of the Duke of Leinster. Ponsonby, it seems, is the protomartyr. I am not mistaken in the opinion I formed of him—a manly, decided character, with a clear, vigorous understanding.'—Burke to Lord Charlemont, March 29, 1789.

[3] Lodge Morris had private wrongs to complain of. The Duke of Rutland had promised him a seat in the Privy Council, and Buckingham had left the promise unfulfilled.

'Lord Buckingham,' he said in his letter, 'has acted contemptuously and unjustifiably towards Parliament. He has broken the

the Cabinet answered with a dismissal. Finally, the Duke of Leinster was deprived of the Mastership of the Rolls, an office of which his possession was an absurdity, and retired to Carton to digest his disgust, and encourage his brother in treason.

So ended a business disgraceful to all concerned in it—disgraceful to the English Whigs, who had allowed themselves for their own purposes to trifle with the insanity of Ireland—disgraceful to the spurious enthusiasts for independence, who had taken the pay of Government and turned against it, expecting a new Viceroy and a change of wind, and when they found themselves mistaken, broke the faith which they had sworn to one another [1]—most disgraceful of all to the Government, which stooped again to gain its ends by dabbling in the filthy waters of Parliamentary corruption. Lord Buckingham might congratulate himself on 'having been able to withdraw the favour of Government from unprincipled politicians who, in critical movements, proved always false to their engagements.' [2] But the band of malcontents was broken by bribery, by the gross and flagrant purchase of the so-called independent members, and by promotion equally scandalous of persons whose fitter reward

faith of the King's Government solemnly pledged for services performed, and has thereby disgraced the memory of the Duke of Rutland, our late beloved Chief Governor. With these impressions on my mind, it cannot be expected that the Marquis should be the object of great personal respect from me.'—*MSS. Ireland*, April 12, 1789. S. P. O.

[1] It is interesting to find among the subscribers of the round-robin the unsuccessful Lord Rawdon, of the American war, now Earl of Moira.

[2] 'Buckingham to Lord Sydney, March 30. Most secret.'

would have been the horsewhip. 13,000*l.* a year was bestowed in the form of pensions. New offices were created of which the salaries were large and the duties small or none.[1] Nine lords gained a step in the peerage, Loftus earning an earldom by his timely desertion of the subscribers; and seven commoners were translated into the lower stages of those celestial regions to rise in turn by new services into the higher spheres. Some ascended by first descending; some by genuine merit and proved fidelity. In this strange scandal began the noble house of Londonderry. Lord Lifford having resigned the Great Seal, Fitzgibbon, the one person who had borne himself throughout with scornful integrity, became on the same occasion Lord Chancellor.

Mr. Grattan and his friends, after so signal a defeat, found their cause hopeless so long as the House of Commons was unreformed, and they established a separate Assembly, through which they could make known their opinions. Borne on the rising tide of modern democracy, spirited into hope and daring by the storming of the Bastille, they formed themselves into the celebrated Whig Club, where the dinners were accompanied with speeches which became the ornament of the patriot newspapers. Their objects were to resist English encroachments, to reform the Constitution, and maintain the rights of the people. The aristocratic chiefs of the party held out their hands to the members of the secret societies, who, in meaner circles, had kept

[1] A hundred and ten 'servants of the Crown' were now in the House of Commons — disciplined into obedience by the punishment of the mutineers.

alive the sacred flame; and the Club was composed of men part of whom were hanged or exiled for high treason; the other part became Privy Councillors, Judges, or Cabinet Ministers.

'Under this banner,' said Fitzgibbon afterwards, 'was ranged such a motley collection of congenial characters as never before were assembled for the reformation of a State. Mr. Napper Tandy was received by acclamation as a statesman too important and illustrious to be committed to the hazard of a ballot. Mr. Hamilton Rowan repaired to the same flag. In the fury of political resentment noblemen and gentlemen of the first rank in this country stooped to associate with the refuse of the community, whose principles they abhorred, and whose manners must have excited their disgust.'[1]

Lord Buckingham, brought into haven at last, declined further experience of Irish government, and went home. Dublin proposed to illuminate on his departure. The mob designed him a rougher farewell. He disappointed the kind intentions of both city and populace by embarking quietly and unexpectedly at Blackrock. The reins were passed to the Earl of Westmoreland, who landed on the 5th of January, Major Hobart, afterwards Earl of Buckingham, being Secretary.

[1] Lord Clare's speech on the Union.

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.